

BW601

W/5

Mrs. D. N. Hightower  
Cedar town  
Ga.

Wes. 1990

L. May 1870



HISTORY  
OF THE  
METHODIST PROTESTANT  
CHURCH.



THE HISTORY OF THE

AMERICAN

REPUBLIC

OF THE

HISTORY  
OF THE  
METHODIST PROTESTANT  
CHURCH,

BY  
JAMES R. WILLIAMS.

---

BALTIMORE:  
PUBLISHED BY THE BOOK COMMITTEE OF THE M. P. CHURCH.

---

1843.

BW/601

W5-

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1843,  
BY JAMES R. WILLIAMS,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Maryland.

JOHN D. TOY, PRINTER.

Wes. 1990

## CONTENTS.

---

	Page.
PREFACE, . . . . .	9
Primitive Wesleyan Methodism, . . . . .	13
Methodism after Mr. Wesley's decease, . . . . .	30
Plan of Pacification, . . . . .	41
Commencement of Methodism in North America, . . . . .	48
Establishment of Mr. Wesley's authority by Mr. Rankin, . . . . .	50
Ordinations under the authority of Mr. Wesley, . . . . .	55
Council Plan, . . . . .	59
Methodist Episcopal Church founded, . . . . .	61
Remarks on the exclusion of the laity, . . . . .	64
Camp Meetings, the main cause of increase, . . . . .	73
Presiding Elder question, . . . . .	75
General Discussion of Lay Representation, . . . . .	77
Specimens of the views and writings of Reformers, . . . . .	79
Essay on the unlimited power of the Itinerant Minis- try, by Dr. John French, . . . . .	88
Defence of Lay Representation, by Rev. E. Cooper, . . . . .	97
General Conference Circular, 1824, . . . . .	103
Review of the General Conference Circular, by Rev. James Smith, . . . . .	107
Meeting of Reformers in Baltimore after the rise of the General Conference of 1824, . . . . .	120
Institution of the Mutual Rights, . . . . .	120
Constitution of the Baltimore Union Society, . . . . .	121

	Page.
Circular addressed to the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, . . . . .	124
Editorial Address, . . . . .	126
Expulsions in Tennessee, . . . . .	130
State Conventions held, . . . . .	132
Expulsions in North Carolina, . . . . .	132
Persecution of Reformers in Maryland, . . . . .	136
Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey's account of his persecution in the Baltimore Annual Conference, . . . . .	137
Rev. Asa Shinn's Address to the Baltimore Annual Conference, . . . . .	151
Proceedings of the Baltimore Union Society in rela- tion to Rev. D. B. Dorsey's case, . . . . .	161
Rev. Cornelius Springer's letter to Rev. D. B. Dorsey, . . . . .	164
Measures taken to secure the expulsion of the mem- bers of the Baltimore Union Society, . . . . .	166
Sham trials, . . . . .	171
Examination of the gag-law, . . . . .	181
Remarks on the specifications, . . . . .	185
Grounds of Protests, . . . . .	191
Protest sent to the Presiding Elder, . . . . .	193
Memorial to the Baltimore Annual Conference, . . . . .	195
Reply of the Annual Conference, . . . . .	200
Copy of the Instrument under which the expelled ministers and members united, . . . . .	201
Proceedings of the Female friends of Reform, . . . . .	203
General sympathy of Reformers in behalf of the ex- pelled brethren, . . . . .	212
General Convention, 1827, . . . . .	229
Memorial to the General Conference of 1828, . . . . .	230
Resolutions of the General Conference in reply, . . . . .	237
Call of a General Convention for November, 1828, . . . . .	239
Persecutions, expulsions and secessions at Cincin- nati, Ohio, . . . . .	241
Expulsions and secessions at Lynchburg, Va. . . . .	260

# CONTENTS.

vii

Page.

General Convention of 1828, . . . . .	263
Reply, by the Convention, to the General Conference's paper in answer to the petitions and memorials, . . . . .	265
Articles of Association, . . . . .	282
Persecutions and secessions at Georgetown, D. C. . . . .	288
Expulsions and secessions in Northumberland County, Va. . . . .	293
General Convention of 1830, . . . . .	297
Constitution of the Methodist Protestant Church, . . . . .	303
General Conference of 1831, . . . . .	324
Church members in 1831, . . . . .	327
General Conference of 1838, . . . . .	338
Plan for the creation of a Book Concern, . . . . .	341
Boundaries of Annual Conferences, 1838, . . . . .	343
Number of Church members in 1838, . . . . .	345
Our cause in the West, . . . . .	348
General Conference of 1842, . . . . .	352
Plan of Correspondence with the Dissenting Methodists in England, . . . . .	355
Statistics of the New Connexion in England, . . . . .	356
Report of the Book Committee, . . . . .	357
Explanatory Remarks on the Constitution, . . . . .	364
Statistics of the Methodist Protestant Church, 1842, . . . . .	395

CORRECTION.—Page 189, seventh line from top, read *four* for “three;” and in the eighth line, read *ten* for “fourteen.”

CHAPTER I

The first part of the book is devoted to a general  
description of the country and its inhabitants.  
The second part contains a history of the  
country from the earliest times to the present  
day. The third part is a description of the  
climate and the productions of the country.  
The fourth part is a description of the  
commerce and the manufactures of the  
country. The fifth part is a description of the  
religion and the customs of the country.  
The sixth part is a description of the  
education and the sciences of the country.  
The seventh part is a description of the  
arts and the professions of the country.  
The eighth part is a description of the  
military and the naval forces of the country.  
The ninth part is a description of the  
public and the private law of the country.  
The tenth part is a description of the  
constitution and the government of the country.  
The eleventh part is a description of the  
economy and the industry of the country.  
The twelfth part is a description of the  
social and the domestic life of the country.  
The thirteenth part is a description of the  
literature and the sciences of the country.  
The fourteenth part is a description of the  
fine arts and the music of the country.  
The fifteenth part is a description of the  
architecture and the painting of the country.  
The sixteenth part is a description of the  
gardens and the parks of the country.  
The seventeenth part is a description of the  
fishing and the hunting of the country.  
The eighteenth part is a description of the  
sports and the games of the country.  
The nineteenth part is a description of the  
festivals and the holidays of the country.  
The twentieth part is a description of the  
superstitions and the迷信 of the country.

## P R E F A C E .

---

THE present appears to be the proper time to present our fellowship, and the christian public, with a **HISTORY OF THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH.** The brethren best acquainted with the origin and progress of our denomination are becoming advanced in life, and in a little while will pass off the stage of action. Some have already gone. The materials also, essential to a standard work are disappearing, so that in a few years hence, the historian would find it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain the necessary data for the preparation and completion of a correct history of our Church.

Previously to the sitting of the General Conference of 1838, the writer urged on the representatives elect, the propriety and necessity of obtaining the appointment of a committee to prepare a history of our Church, but this matter appears to have been overlooked in the press of business. Finding that no step had been taken toward the accomplishment of this desirable object, the writer determined to commence the history on his own responsibility, and began by care-



fully reading over all that had been published in our several periodicals and pamphlets on the subject of reform for the past twenty years. In the midst of his labours, however, his progress was arrested by a most painful and protracted attack of inflammatory rheumatism, from which he did not recover, so as to be able to write with ease, till the summer of 1841. He then recommenced his labours, and prosecuted the task to its conclusion.

The work commences with a view of Methodism as it existed under Mr. John Wesley, the founder of the denomination styled Methodists. It then passes to Methodism as it existed after Mr. Wesley's decease, and points out the dissimilarity between the two systems. The former, having been framed and administered by the will and authority of an individual, who claimed the sole right to will and do all things for his Societies, in accordance with his own views of propriety, as the father of a family claims the right to govern his children. The latter, being an aristocracy composed of a limited number of preachers, who aimed to make their government quadrate with that of Mr. Wesley's, but who were forced by the urgent demands of the people, to make great and important changes in favour of christian liberty. From an examination of those two systems of Methodism, the work passes on to the commencement of Methodism in this country, and to the establishment of Episcopal Methodism, with its early assumptions and exclusion of the laity.

This course in the commencement of the History, was deemed necessary to prepare the reader for a clear perception of the following facts:

1. That the Methodist ecclesiastical economy originated in a patriarchal form of government. 2. That as it progressed, it received the disapprobation of many thinking men in its fellowship, both in England and in this country. 3. That a series of decided efforts were made to soften and change its iron features, and to bring it more in accordance with primitive Gospel usage and Scripture warrant. 4. That the claim for *representation*, originated with the Methodists in England; and was revived in this country, on account of the unjustifiable assumptions of the episcopal itinerant ministry.

The body of the work shews, that the discussions on what is called the Presiding Elder question, produced a general examination of the entire system, which brought on a persecution against all those who laboured to produce certain salutary changes and improvements in Episcopal Methodism—that the persecutions hastened a crisis, and produced numerous secessions, in different parts of the United States—that the several secedent bodies organized under a representative form of Church government, with the distinctive appellation of the Methodist Protestant Church, comprising the Associated Methodist Churches.

The progress of this Association is traced in its principal operations up to the present year. The history is submitted to the community as a plain record of facts

by one who was intimately acquainted with the events which transpired during the whole period of our protracted struggle for representation, while ministers and members in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and with the origin and advancement of our own Church to the present time. With a view to avoid the semblance of partiality or error, and to furnish posterity with an authentic history of facts as they occurred, we have, in that part of our performance which narrates the persecutions, expulsions and secessions of Reformers in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Lynchburg, Georgetown and other places, confined ourselves to documents alone, which were published at the time when those things transpired. In the conclusion some appropriate remarks are made on the Constitution of the Church, and a general statistical table is subjoined, shewing the number of Conference Districts, Stations, Circuits, Missions, Stationed and Unstationed Ministers and Preachers, Church Members, the number of Houses of Worship and their value.

BALTIMORE, *April*, 1843.

# HISTORY

## OF THE

### METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH.

---

#### CHAPTER I.

##### PRIMITIVE OR ANCIENT METHODISM.

EVERY person who examines the Constitution and Discipline of the Methodist Protestant Church will perceive, that the government is *Representative*, dividing equally between the ministers and laymen, the entire authority to make such rules and regulations for the whole fellowship, as may be deemed necessary to carry into effect the laws of Christ, the great Head of the Church. A government of this character, in its main features, had been in contemplation by the more enlightened part of the great Methodist family long before the decease of Mr. Wesley. This is called by some Modern Methodism.

A variety of circumstances which have transpired, in Europe and in this country, have contributed to lead Methodists to contemplate the state of absolute degradation to which they were reduced by those who claimed to be their spiritual guides in all things pertaining to

godliness. These will be noticed as we progress. That the reader may be put in possession of a comprehensive and correct view of the whole subject, we deem it necessary to bring into view, at the commencement of our work, a somewhat detailed account of *Methodism* as it existed during Mr. Wesley's life; the changes that obtained after his decease; and also the origin and character of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This sketch, while it records the peculiarities of Methodism, will, at the same time, exhibit the numerous efforts made by preachers and people to introduce a modification of the government which would bring it more in accordance with Protestant principles, and the primitive usages of christianity. And, furthermore, it will shew that the struggle for representation, had its commencement with the Wesleyan Methodists in England.

We here avail ourselves of a paper we prepared and published nearly twenty years ago, which will, in part, furnish the very matter we now need for this part of our history.

Our attention will be directed, first, to "ancient Methodism." This is a term made use of by the English Methodists to designate Methodism as it stood during Mr. Wesley's life. Sometimes it is called "primitive Methodism," and at other times, the "old plan," in contradistinction to the new order of things, which obtained upon the adoption of the "articles of pacification," after the decease of Mr. Wesley.

The following prominent features of that economy, which we will exhibit in Mr. Wesley's words, will enable the reader to form a correct notion of ancient Methodism. First, the origin and extent of Mr. Wesley's power. Secondly, the power delegated by him to the

officers of his societies; their relation, one to the other; and the relation in which the societies stood to the Church of England.

First. The origin and extent of Mr. Wesley's power. This we will give in Mr. Wesley's own words.

*Ques. 27.* What Power is this which you exercise over both the Preachers and Societies?

*Ans.* Count Zinzendorf loved to keep all things *close*. I love to do all things *openly*. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

1. In November, 1738, two or three persons who desired to flee from the wrath to come, and then a few more came to me in London, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, "If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can." More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The case was afterwards the same at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and many other parts of England, Scotland and Ireland. It may be observed, the desire was on their part, not mine. My desire was, to live and die in retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God.

Here commenced my *Power*; namely, a power to appoint *when*, and *where*, and *how* they should meet; and to remove those whose lives shewed that they had not a desire to flee from the wrath to come. And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, or twelve hundred, or twelve thousand.

2. In a few days some of them said, Sir, we will not sit under you for nothing: we will subscribe quarterly. I said, "I will have nothing; for I want nothing. My

Fellowship supplies me with all I want." One replied, "Nay, but you want an hundred and fifteen pounds to pay for the lease of the foundery: and likewise a large sum of money to put it into repair." On this consideration I suffered them to subscribe, and when the society met, I asked, "Who will take the trouble of receiving the money, and paying it where it is needful?" One said, I will do it, and keep the account for you. So here was the first *steward*. Afterwards I desired one or two more to help me as stewards, and in process of time a greater number.

Let it be remarked, it was I *myself*, not the *people*, who chose these stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work, wherein he was to help me as long as I desired. And herein I began to exercise another sort of *Power*, namely, that of appointing and removing stewards.

3. After a time a young man named Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the Gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards, and then a third, Thomas Westall. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour *when* and *where* I should direct. Observe. These likewise desired *me*, not I *them*. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my Power, to appoint each of these *when*, *where*, and *how* to labour: that is, while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased: as I had also to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same, when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint *when*, *where* and *how* each should help me: and to tell any (if I saw cause) "I do not desire your help any longer." On these terms, and no other, we joined at

first: on these we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true, my reward is with the Lord.—But at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care; and often a burden I scarce know how to bear.

4. In 1744, I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the Gospel; desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice, concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increased, so that it was not convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and they *only* met me at London, or elsewhere, till, at length I gave a general permission, which I now see cause to retract.

Observe. I myself sent for these of my own free choice. And I sent for them to advise, not to govern me. Neither did I at any time divest myself of any part of the power above described, which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine.

5. What is that *power*? It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from the societies under my care: of choosing and removing stewards: of receiving or not receiving helpers: of appointing them when, where, and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to confer with me when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted of this power, which I never sought: so it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day.

6. But “several gentlemen are offended at your having so much power.” I did not seek any part of it.



But when it came unawares, not daring to bury that talent, I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden, the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not lay it down.

But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who *can* and will do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.

7. But some of our helpers say, "This is shackling freeborn Englishmen," and demand a *free conference*, that is, a meeting of all the preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer, it is possible after my death something of this kind may take place. But not while I live. To *me* the preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to "serve me as sons in the Gospel." But they are not thus engaged to any man, or number of men besides. To *me* the people submit: but they *will not* thus submit to any other." *Minutes of Con. vol. I, p. 58.*

From the above extract it appears, that Mr. Wesley claimed and exercised an unlimited, unamenable, and absolute authority over all the preachers, stewards, leaders, and people belonging to his societies throughout the three kingdoms, as Methodists. And that he considered himself accountable to God alone for the exercise of the immense power he held in his own hands. Methodism, then, in this particular, differed from all other Protestant religious associations, as it placed in the hands of a single individual, the legislative, judicial and executive authorities. Happy for the people and preachers, that this individual used his great power with a single eye to the glory of God, and the salvation of men.

Second. The power delegated by Mr. Wesley to the officers of his societies, and their relation one to the other. The following extract from Mr. Wesley's Journal, has been recently published in England, under the title of "Outline of the Primitive Church government of our Societies." And was sent to this country in August of the year 1820, by a distinguished member of the British Conference.

"On Wednesday evening I read over to the leaders the following paper:

1. That it may be more easily discerned whether the members of our societies are working out their own salvation, they are divided into little companies called classes; one person in each of these is styled a *leader*.\* It is his business

\*The following is Mr. Wesley's account of the origin of this class of officers:—

"I was talking with several of the Society in Bristol, concerning the means of paying the debts there; when one stood up and said, 'let every member of the Society give a penny a week, till all are paid.' Another answered, 'but many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it.' 'Then,' said he, 'put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give any thing, well. I will call on them weekly, and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly; and receive what they give, and make up what is wanting.' It was done. In a while some of these informed me, they found such an such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, This is the thing; the very thing we wanted so long. I called together all the leaders of the classes, (so we used to term them and their companies,) and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the behaviour of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us. Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence.

"As soon as possible the same method was used in London, and all other places. Evil men were detected, and reprov'd. They were

I. To see each person in his class once a week. To enquire how their souls prosper? To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort them.

II. To receive what they are willing to give towards the expenses of the society; and

III. To meet the assistant and the stewards once a week.

2. This is the *whole and sole business* of a leader, or any number of leaders. But it is common for the assistant, in any place, when several leaders are met together, to ask their advice, as to any thing that concerns either the temporal or spiritual welfare of the society. This he may, or he may not do, as he sees best. I frequently do it in the larger societies; and on many occasions I have found, that in a multitude of counsellors there is safety.

3. From this short view of the original design of leaders, it is easy to answer the following questions:

Q. 1. What *authority* has a single leader? He has authority to meet his class; to receive their contributions; and to visit the sick in his class.

Q. 2. What authority have all the leaders of a society met together? They have authority to shew their class-papers to the assistant; to deliver the money they have received to the stewards; and to bring in the names of the sick.

Q. 3. But have they not authority to *restrain* the assistant, if they think he acts improperly? No more than any member of the society has. After mildly

borne with for a season. If they forsook their sins, we received them gladly; if they obstinately persisted therein, it was openly declared, that they were not of us. The rest mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced, that, as far as in us lay, the scandal was rolled away from the Society."

speaking to him, they are to refer the thing to Mr. W. (Wesley.)

Q. 4. Have they not authority to *hinder* a person from preaching? None but the assistant has this authority.

Q. 5. Have they not authority to *displace* a particular leader? No more than the door-keeper has. To *place* and to *displace* leaders belongs to the assistant alone.

Q. 6. Have they not authority to expel a particular member of the society? No; the assistant only can do this.

Q. 7. But have they not authority to *regulate* the *temporal* and *spiritual affairs* of the society? Neither the one nor the other. Temporal affairs belong to the stewards; spiritual to the assistant.

Q. 8. Have they authority to make any *collection* of a public nature? No; the assistant only can do this.

Q. 9. Have they authority to *receive* the yearly *subscription*? No; this also belongs to the assistant.

Considering these things, can we wonder at the confusion which has been here for some years? If one wheel in a machine gets out of its place, what disorder must ensue! In the Methodist discipline, the wheels regularly stand thus:—the assistant,\* the preacher, the stewards, the leaders, the people. But here, the leaders, who are the lowest wheel but one, were got quite out of their place. They were got at the top of all, above the stewards, the preachers, yea, and above the assistant himself.

\* The "Assistant" was the preacher appointed by Mr. Wesley to take charge of the circuit or station, and was constantly accountable to him for the discharge of every part of his duty, and to no one else.

4. To this chiefly I impute the gradual decay of the work of God in Dublin.

There has been a jar throughout the whole machine. Most of the wheels were hindered in their motion. The stewards, the preachers, the assistant, all moved heavily. They felt all was not right. But if they saw where the fault lay, they had not strength to remedy it.

But it may be effectually remedied now. Without rehearsing former grievances (which may all die and be forgotten) for the time to come, let each wheel keep its own place. Let the assistant, the preachers, the stewards, the leaders, know and execute their several offices; let none encroach upon another, but all move together in harmony and love. So shall the work of God flourish among you, perhaps as it never did before; while you all hold the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace."

*Dublin, March 29, 1771.*

The relation which the Methodist societies sustained to the Church of England, during Mr. Wesley's administration.

Mr. Wesley himself, and perhaps a majority of the members of his societies were Church of England men, and viewed as individuals, they constituted integral parts of the Church; but the Presbyterians, Baptists, &c. who joined the Methodist society, and still retained their membership in their respective congregations, certainly were not Church of England men. Nor could the circumstance of their joining the Methodist society give them membership in that Church. Again, if a churchman were expelled by Mr. Wesley from *his* society, that act of expulsion did not affect his membership in the Church, which would have been the case if the Methodist society had constituted a part of the establishment.

Furthermore, Mr. Wesley never did subject his society, as a religious community, to the control of any parochial clergyman in the three kingdoms; nor would he on any account suffer the ecclesiastical authorities of the national Church, to interfere with the internal management of his societies. From these facts, it would seem to the disinterested observer, that the Methodist societies, during Mr. Wesley's life, were neither more nor less than associations of christians of every denomination, a majority of whom, perhaps, were churchmen, united together, *under the entire control of Mr. Wesley*, for the purpose of assisting each other to work out their salvation; and, that they no more constituted a part of the establishment than the Bible society, which admitted members from every denomination, constituted a part of the Church of England. Mr. Wesley himself denominated them "the united societies." And yet, he appears to have contemplated them as parts of the Church of England, which is obvious, both from his writings and proceedings; and it appears to have been his determination that this view should be perpetuated. Mr. Wesley has told us what he meant by a separation from the Church, in the following words: "The question properly refers, when I speak of a separation from the Church, to a total and immediate separation, such as that of Mr. Ingham's people first, and afterwards that of Lady Huntingdon's, who all agreed to form themselves into a separate body without delay; to go to Church no more, and to have no more connexion with the Church of England than with the Church of Rome." *Mag. for 1789.*

In relation to an actual separation, Mr. Wesley says: "Whether it be lawful or no, (which itself may be dis-

puted, being not so clear a point as some imagine) it is by no means expedient for us to separate from the established Church. Because it would be a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declaration, which we have made in all manner of ways, in preaching, in print, and in private conversation." "Because to form the plan of a new Church, would require infinite time and care, with much more wisdom and greater depth and extensiveness of thought, than any of us are masters of." "Because by such a separation we should not only throw away the peculiar glorying which God has given us, that we do and will suffer all things for our brethren's sake, though the more we love them, the less we are beloved: but should act in direct contradiction to that very end, for which we believe God hath raised us up. The chief design of his providence in sending us out, is undoubtedly, to quicken our brethren—and the first message of all our preachers is, to the lost sheep of the Church of England. Now would it not be a flat contradiction to this design, to separate from the Church? These things being considered, we cannot apprehend, whether it be lawful in itself or no, that it is lawful for us: were it only on this ground, that it is by no means expedient." See Wesley's twelve reasons against separating from the Church.

In the magazine for 1790, just one year before his death, Mr. Wesley says: "I never had any design of separating from the Church—I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it when I am no more seen. I do, and will do all that is in my power to prevent such an effect. Nevertheless, in spite of all that I can do, many of them will separate from it, (although I am apt to think, not one-



half, perhaps not a third of them.) These will be so bold and injudicious, as to form a separate party, which, consequently, will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate sect. In flat opposition to these, I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England: and that none who regard my judgment or advice, will ever separate from it."

In accordance with these views of Church relationship, every thing was done in conformity with Church order, so far as it was possible, without subjecting the society to the control of the Church bishops. Clergymen were employed to celebrate divine worship in several of the chapels, particularly those in London, in their canonical attire. The service of the Church was adopted, and the Church Prayer Book or Mr. Wesley's Abridgment was used, &c. And Mr. Bradburn tells us, that "there was a design formed to place a clergyman in each of the large places, (principal stations,) to officiate as in London."

From these instances, it would seem that Mr. Wesley considered the "united societies" as connected with the Church of England, and that it was his intention they should remain so for ever. His brother Charles was so attached to the Church, that he said he should be afraid to meet his father's spirit in Paradise if he left it.

It must be remarked, however, that Mr. John Wesley's attachment to the Church, did not prevent him from deviating from the Church order, when imperious circumstances demanded a change of conduct, as is exemplified in the case of his ordaining ministers for Scotland and America. He had applied to the Church authorities to ordain certain preachers for this service, but could not obtain their consent, unless he subjected



puted, being not so clear a point as some imagine) it is by no means expedient for us to separate from the established Church. Because it would be a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declaration, which we have made in all manner of ways, in preaching, in print, and in private conversation." "Because to form the plan of a new Church, would require infinite time and care, with much more wisdom and greater depth and extensiveness of thought, than any of us are masters of." "Because by such a separation we should not only throw away the peculiar glorying which God has given us, that we do and will suffer all things for our brethren's sake, though the more we love them, the less we are beloved: but should act in direct contradiction to that very end, for which we believe God hath raised us up. The chief design of his providence in sending us out, is undoubtedly, to quicken our brethren—and the first message of all our preachers is, to the lost sheep of the Church of England. Now would it not be a flat contradiction to this design, to separate from the Church? These things being considered, we cannot apprehend, whether it be lawful in itself or no, that it is lawful for us: were it only on this ground, that it is by no means expedient." See Wesley's twelve reasons against separating from the Church.

In the magazine for 1790, just one year before his death, Mr. Wesley says: "I never had any design of separating from the Church—I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it when I am no more seen. I do, and will do all that is in my power to prevent such an effect. Nevertheless, in spite of all that I can do, many of them will separate from it, (although I am apt to think, not one-

half, perhaps not a third of them.) These will be so bold and injudicious, as to form a separate party, which, consequently, will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate sect. In flat opposition to these, I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England: and that none who regard my judgment or advice, will ever separate from it."

In accordance with these views of Church relationship, every thing was done in conformity with Church order, so far as it was possible, without subjecting the society to the control of the Church bishops. Clergymen were employed to celebrate divine worship in several of the chapels, particularly those in London, in their canonical attire. The service of the Church was adopted, and the Church Prayer Book or Mr. Wesley's Abridgment was used, &c. And Mr. Bradburn tells us, that "there was a design formed to place a clergyman in each of the large places, (principal stations,) to officiate as in London."

From these instances, it would seem that Mr. Wesley considered the "united societies" as connected with the Church of England, and that it was his intention they should remain so for ever. His brother Charles was so attached to the Church, that he said he should be afraid to meet his father's spirit in Paradise if he left it.

It must be remarked, however, that Mr. John Wesley's attachment to the Church, did not prevent him from deviating from the Church order, when imperious circumstances demanded a change of conduct, as is exemplified in the case of his ordaining ministers for Scotland and America. He had applied to the Church authorities to ordain certain preachers for this service, but could not obtain their consent, unless he subjected

those preachers to the authority of the bishops, which he was determined never to do. Upon their refusal, he immediately entered upon the ordination himself; and, according to his account, with a good conscience. For he says, "Lord King's account of the primitive Church, convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters, (elders,) are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace sake; but because I was determined, as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church, to which I belonged." Minutes, 1785.

Multitudes of the people, and many of the preachers, were decidedly of the opinion, that the Methodist societies were in connexion with the established Church; and so tenacious were they of this "union," that after the decease of Mr. Wesley, they opposed with the greatest degree of warmth, every attempt to have preaching in Church hours, and the administration of the Sacrament by the Methodist preachers, as "ruinous to the providential cause of God," and "subversive of primitive Wesleyan Methodism." To be united to the Church, and to receive the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper at the hands of the clergy, was then called "the old plan," "the good old way," "primitive Wesleyan Methodism." Others, however, were of a different opinion, and viewed the Methodists as a body in the light of dissenters, and were clamorous for the administration of the Lord's Supper by the Methodist preachers.

In 1784, six years before his death, Mr. Wesley executed a "deed of declaration," constituting one hundred of the travelling preachers, therein named, and their successors forever, "the Conference of the people called Methodists," with power to fill up all vacancies occurring in their body. The design of this act, we are told by Mr. Miles, in his History of the Methodists, "was, to give a *legal* specification to the phrase, the 'Conference of the people called Methodists,' which is inserted in all the deeds of the chapels." By virtue of this deed of declaration, the British Conference, at their first session after the decease of Mr. Wesley, claimed, on *legal premises*, the entire control of all the societies and chapels, in as full a manner as this prerogative was exercised by Mr. Wesley.

By the deed of declaration, however, Mr. Wesley could not in justice convey to the hundred preachers his authority to govern the societies on patriarchal principles. To have done so, would have been unjust. The father of a family can have no right to confer on some of his sons the same power over their brethren which he himself exercised as a parent. And the sons, if they think and feel as free men are wont to think and feel, would not submit to such dominion of men who are only their equals.

Upon a careful review of Mr. Wesley's own account of the origin and extent of his power, over the preachers and societies, there is not the slightest evidence that he modelled his government on Gospel or primitive usages, or any ecclesiastical precedent whatever. Nor did he in any instance refer his authority to Apostolic succession, for he viewed this miserable pretext, as "a fable which no man did or can prove." The entire system,

from first to last, was the creature of circumstances, which he constantly viewed as the openings of Providence. The societies were considered by him as purely religious companies, within the pale of the English Church, united together for the purpose of helping each other to work out their salvation, and himself as their head, and *supreme* governor under Christ. His will being law for both preachers and people, and reserving to himself the sole right to inflict such penalties for the infractions of his rules, as he deemed suitable to the offence, and from his decision there was no appeal. It is difficult to conceive of a more complete system of clerical despotism. *This system was Methodism during the life of Mr. Wesley.*

Dr. Whitehead, in his life of Wesley, says, that strictly speaking he governed the societies with "a power that was *absolute*." "Hitherto I have spoken, says he, of Mr. Wesley's power only in relation to his personal character. But I readily acknowledge, that his absolute, *unlimited* power has, in its consequences, since his death, been a great injury to the societies. It has been the *parent* of a system of government, highly oppressive to many individuals, and much more injurious to the rights of the people than his own. He constantly acted as a middle person, between the preachers and people; and was always ready to protect the people, the poor as well as the rich, against any insult or oppression they might receive. At *present* the preachers claim unlimited powers, both to make laws and execute them, by themselves or their deputies, without any intermediate authority existing, to act as a check in favour of the people. But what is still much worse than all the rest, is, that the *present* system of government among

the Methodists, requires such acts of human policy and chicanery to carry it on, as, in my opinion, are totally inconsistent with the openness of Gospel simplicity." Dr. Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 474. Dublin Edition.

Another reflection which will present itself to the reader is, that, notwithstanding Mr. Wesley was acknowledged to be the father of the whole family, and highly venerated on account of his age and great usefulness, yet, there existed much dissatisfaction on account of his unlimited and unamenable power. "Several gentlemen are offended at your having so much power."—And "some of our helpers (preachers) say this is shackling free-born Englishmen, and demand a free conference, that is, a meeting of all the preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes." This state of uneasiness increased as Mr. Wesley drew nigher to his dissolution; and, the time of his decease was looked to, by all parties with great solicitude. On March 2d, 1791, Mr. Wesley departed in the full assurance of a blessed immortality and eternal life, in the 88th year of his age.

## CHAPTER II.

## ENGLISH METHODISM AFTER THE DEATH OF MR. WESLEY.

To put the reader in possession of a concise view of the nature and bearings of the controversy which obtained, after the decease of Mr. Wesley, and which led to the adoption of the "plan of pacification," we will present him with two extracts taken from pamphlets published in England. By which it will be seen, that not only the question of Church relationship was warmly agitated but also the question relative to the right of the preachers in Conferences, to legislate for, and govern the people without their consent, in the absence of all representation on the part of the people.

The following extract is taken from a pamphlet written in 1793, by a Methodist Layman:—

As Mr. Wesley was now dead, who had been the head and centre of union amongst the preachers, and as disagreeable innovations might probably be introduced, the London and many other large societies, thought proper to send letters to the conference, expressing, in general and respectful terms, the opinion of the people respecting the plan which might be pursued. Being assembled in conference, the preachers appear to have considered themselves as sole masters of the whole, and imagined deliberation with the people to be perfectly unnecessary; and their destroying the addresses they received, without perusing them, to put the best construction we can upon their motives, was treating the people with contempt. They saw at the sametime the alteration Mr. Wesley's death had made in the connexion,



with respect to themselves, and forgot that it also affected the body. Accustomed, by Mr. Wesley's influence, to govern a community, who had a most implicit and well grounded confidence in his designs and measures, they unhappily imagined that *their* influence would be equal to his. On this ground we can only account for most of their proceedings. To rule without permitting the body to deliberate, appears to have been a maxim on which the conference rested their first proceedings. Hence, in the first instance, they rejected all interference on the part of the people, and constituted themselves a supreme legislative body; assuming the absolute power of making laws, which shall be binding on all the preachers, itinerant and local, and on all the people through all the Methodist societies; although many of the preachers, and all the people, are without a voice, and without any representative in the conference. But they did not stop here; for who knows where to stop in fixing the limits of his own authority, where he imagines he only has the power of doing it. They next made themselves a supreme court of judicature, where all differences between the itinerant and local preachers, and between the itinerants and people, shall be finally decided without an appeal. Here then, we see, they are parties in the cause, and judge and jury in the trial.

The conference must be "*absolute masters*," says their first president, in a letter to a preacher. That is, must have the sole disposal of all the chapels in the three kingdoms; of collections every where made; of all the offices held in the society, and the influence connected with them; and of all the religious rights and privileges of the preachers and people. Wonderful! and almost incredible, did we not hear them with our own ears, assert these



claims; and see them with our own eyes, act accordingly. This is surely a new thing in the world, which Solomon, with all his wisdom, could not foresee. A company of laymen taken from their trades, and cherished and fed by the people, on account of their supposed simplicity, piety, and zeal to do good, combine together, invade the rights of their brethren, and assume a more absolute authority than ever was attempted by the most arbitrary *priest* in any Protestant Church!

The people knew the goodness of Mr. Wesley's motives; they loved him as a father; had the fullest confidence in his known wisdom and integrity; and being unwilling to grieve or offend him, they permitted him to do every thing he thought best. But this gave him no right but what was founded on the will of the people. Indeed Mr. Wesley never claimed any right to the power which he exercised, but what was purely *personal*; he being the person who, under God, had raised the societies—formed their plan of discipline—and, from the incapacities of the people in their infant state had gradually grown up into the authority and power which he possessed. These were the grounds on which he founded his claim to power, over the preachers and people. But the notion of transferring his right to others after his death, never entered into his head. The claims, therefore set up by the conference, of inheriting from Mr. Wesley what could not be transferred, is idle, absurd, and founded in a spirit of usurpation.

The conference having assumed the uncontrolled power of making laws for the whole connexion, and of deciding upon all controversies between themselves, the local preachers and people, and having the absolute disposal of all money collected for various purposes, and

the patronage of all places of trust, &c. in the societies; it is manifest that the government was changed. The monarchical form of it was lost, and it was now founded on the principle of an aristocracy. This is the worst form of government that can exist. The people are mere slaves, having no voice in the making of those laws by which they are to be governed, nor in the decision of those causes in which their dearest interests are involved. This appears to be the present situation of the members of the Methodist societies. And if any one has courage to complain, he is immediately marked as a disaffected man, an enemy to the preachers—the itinerant plan, and to Methodism itself.

The following extract is from a pamphlet written in 1795, by an English travelling preacher.

When the Lord graciously called our venerable Father to his great reward, those things which he maintained purely by his own influence, as the founder of Methodism, and which were submitted to, on account of his age and great usefulness in the Church, became subjects of debate. The minds of the people and the preachers were a good deal agitated, before the conference met in 1791. The signal gun was fired from Hull, for trustees, stewards, leaders, and private members, to resolve in every place, to continue united to the Church of England. This was seconded by many of our principal societies; but opposed by others. Many letters were circulated before the meeting of the conference. Many things were said in defence of the people's having an *unalienable right* in any place, to worship God, as they considered would be most for his glory: while a general cry was made from every quarter, for us to adhere strictly to the Church and allow no innovations.

The eyes of our societies and congregations were lifted up to the conference. Dissenters of every denomination were anxiously waiting to see what we should determine.—When the preachers assembled, they found two parties, opposite to each other, both wishing to be heard, and to have their claim granted. A great number of our societies desired us to cleave to the Church with purpose of heart: and many of the old Methodists even wished that the liberty Mr. Wesley had given to different societies, might be wrested from them. The other party earnestly desired to have the privilege of worshiping in church hours, and to have the Lord's Supper administered among them. After very long and warm debates on the subject, a majority of the conference decreed, that the plan should be taken up and pursued, as Mr. Wesley left it. This decree satisfied the minds of many, and brought a degree of tranquility into those places which had been agitated. The part of the connexion which wished to preserve the old plan, supposed their end was fully accomplished; while the other party considered, that Mr. Wesley's plan admitted of *such changes* as they wished to introduce.

As the sacrament was given in several places, and some of the preachers ordained to administer in the course of the year, many of the friends, who were warm advocates for the Church, took the alarm, and cried out exceedingly against these steps, and considered the preachers who had engaged in these things, as *dreadful innovators*. Several pamphlets were written to prove, that these steps were both lawful and expedient. When the conference met in London, in 1792, the preachers who had been guilty of ordination or the sacrament, were tried by their brethren, and condemned.

After long and fruitless debates on the sacrament, it was put to the lot, whether the Lord's Supper should be administered in England or not, the next year, and the lot came out for no sacrament. Those that were for the Church, and earnestly desirous of preventing liberty of conscience now triumphed, as *though God himself* had been particularly engaged, in restricting the privileges of our people. Every preacher, who should act contrary to the design of this lot, was threatened with expulsion. We left the conference under a dark cloud, which prevented the *sun of liberty* from shining upon our connexion that year. Several large societies, however, resolved, if the conference would not allow them to have the Lord's Supper in their own chapels, they would have it somewhere without their consent.

When the preachers met in Leeds, 1793, the subject was again brought forward, and new debates commenced. After much altercation had passed, it was found *absolutely necessary*, either to allow the sacrament in some places, or lose our societies and congregations. This forced a majority of the preachers to consent, that the influence of the lot should be suspended. A decree passed, 'That the sacrament should not be given but where the society were unanimous, and where they would not be content without it.' We groaned under this act of uniformity till the Bristol conference: when we had it renewed with some little alteration. A vast number of places, however, were put down on the minutes, 1794, where the people were unanimous, according to the spirit of the decree. This greatly affected the minds of those, who wished to bind us to the Church for ever.

A few trustees had met previous to the meeting of the Bristol conference, 1794, and a delegate was appointed from them, to bring an address and proposals to the preachers, when they should assemble. After they perceived their plans could not be fully adopted, many of them were exceedingly mortified.

The Bristol trustees determined, however, to fire a signal gun of a different nature from that which was fired from Hull, three years before. They threw off the *authority* of the conference, and rejected one of its members. This was only beginning to let out the waters of strife. It happened in a good time of the year. The preachers, trustees, leaders, stewards, and private people, had eleven months to conflict in a paper war, before the conference could meet again. This was attended with many things, both pleasing and painful to the connexion. A vast number of papers, letters, and pamphlets, were written and circulated on the subject. *The dispute went farther than the cases in hand. Our constitution, laws, discipline, &c. were brought into sight, and many things proposed as amendments of our plan.*

It was supposed by many, that when the conference met in Manchester, 1795, it would be impossible to prevent a division among the preachers. A number of respectable trustees from different parts in the kingdom assembled in Manchester, to see what they called *their rights* maintained; and to propose to the conference their determinations.

When the British conference met in 1795, the preachers found it absolutely necessary to come to some terms of accommodation with the people, or witness the most extensive separations. In the minutes of that conference they say: "When we assembled together, our hearts

were deeply touched with the awful situation of our affairs. We trembled at the thoughts of a division, and its fearful consequences." "We saw, the necessity of appointing a committee, to prepare a plan of general pacification; and that the committee might be men of our own choice, in the fullest sense of the word, we resolved that they should be chosen by ballot. Every preacher, therefore, in full connexion, gave in nine papers, with nine names upon each, (nine being the predetermined number of the committee.) The ballots were received, and Messrs. Mather and Pawson, were desired to retire and count the votes. When they returned, they gave in the following names, as the first upon the list: viz. Joseph Bradford, who was president, (of the conference,) John Pawson, Alexander Mather, Thomas Coke, William Thompson, Samuel Bradburn, Joseph Benson, Henry Moore, and Adam Clark. The committee met six evenings, successively, and sat each evening for about three hours and a half. Their plan was at last completed, and laid before the conference; who, with the alteration of a single article, passed it unanimously." Minutes of British Conference 1795.

The conference passed the plan and published it under the full expectation that it would satisfy many and intimidate the rest.

This plan of pacification, however, did not satisfy the people. Nor could the weighty penalty (namely, the expulsion of any one who should speak for or against the plan) contained in the eighth article, prevent them from speaking their minds fully, "concerning the old system and the new plan," and publishing their sentiments on the right of Methodists to participate in the governmental regulations of the societies; for, so soon as the plan was

made public, a new paper war was commenced, in which the plan was thoroughly investigated; its deficiencies pointed out; its violations of rights exposed; and it was pronounced to be totally inadequate to effect the object contemplated by its framers, namely, "general pacification." Meetings were held at different places; resolutions declarative of the views and wishes of the members were adopted; circular letters and addresses were distributed throughout the connexion; and the dissatisfaction was evidently much increased. Several of the leading preachers embarked in the controversy, and strenuously opposed *representation* from the people, either in the district meetings, or the conference. And contended, that the preachers were the proper representatives of the people.

Our limits will not permit us to give a detailed account of this controversy, which lasted for two years; we will, therefore, only put down the demands of the reformers, that the reader may know, to what extent they wished reformation. The following is an extract from a circular published in England, November, 1796.

#### CIRCULAR.

It has been frequently asked, What are the things you wish to have established for our future prosperity? Are not the following particulars expressive of every thing we want?

I. Let *positive* laws be enacted by the conference, that no person shall be received to, or excluded, from, the connexion, but by the concurrence of a meeting of the leaders, &c. called for that purpose.

II. That no leaders nor stewards, shall be appointed to, or removed from their office, but by the concurrence of the major part of a full leaders' meeting.

NOTICE: THIS M  
BY COPYRIGHT



III. That no person shall be allowed to exercise as a local preacher, without the approbation of a major part of a full leaders' meeting—and that no person receive a plan as a local preacher, until he is mentioned and approved of in a quarterly meeting.

IV. That no person shall go out to travel, *under any pretence whatever*, until he is both *mentioned and approved*, by the leaders' and the quarterly meeting.

V. That no preacher received on trial, shall be admitted into full connexion, without being recommended by the two last circuits where he has travelled, expressed in *writing*, from their quarterly meetings, to the district meeting, and the conference.

VI. That no circuit stewards shall be appointed to, or removed from their office, without the concurrence of the quarterly meeting; and that no steward abide longer than two years in that office, unless in particular cases, mutually agreed upon by the brethren that are present on the occasion.

VII. That two or more delegates, *chosen by the people, without the least interference, directly or indirectly from the preachers*, be appointed by each circuit; to attend the district meetings, possessed of equal powers with the preachers, and required to assist in transacting all the affairs which are brought into those meetings.

VIII. That these delegates, when assembled together at a district meeting, shall elect two or more from their body to attend the conference. These delegates shall possess equal powers with the preachers *in every respect*. They shall carry in all the public collections, and assist in disbursing them. No new laws or rules shall be made without their concurrence. And all the laws and rules respecting *discipline*, that already exist, shall only



be binding, by being revised with *their special sanction; particularly* those laws and rules made since the death of Mr. Wesley.

About 200 trustees, delegated from all parts of the kingdom, assembled at Leeds during the sitting of the conference in July, 1797, fully prepared, and resolutely determined to press the claims of the societies on the attention of the conference. The conference, of course, did not much relish those determined assemblies, but the preachers found it absolutely necessary to adopt a new "plan of pacification," in the place of that which had been passed at the conference of 1795. In the new plan most of the demands made in the preceding circular, and others made in different addresses, was granted, with the exceptions of *delegates to sit in conference, chosen by the people*. This claim was resisted by the conference at all hazards, and a separation of about five thousand members took place immediately.\* Mr. Crowther says,

\* An English writer furnishes the following history of this secession.

Many societies, in various parts of the kingdom, sent delegates to the conference at Leeds in 1797: they were instructed to request, that the people might have a voice in *the formation of their own laws, the choice of their own officers, and the distribution of their own property*. The preachers proceeded to discuss two motions. First: Shall delegates from the societies be admitted into the conference? Secondly: Shall circuit stewards be admitted into the district meetings? Both motions were negatived, and consequently, all hopes of accommodation between the parties were given up. Several friends of religious liberty proposed a plan for a new itinerancy. A meeting was called for the purpose of preparing a plan, which, when matured, was printed and sent throughout the societies for their examination. At a subsequent conference of preachers and delegates the plan was amended and adopted. The leading features are as follows: The preachers and people are incorporated in all meetings for business. The classes choose their own leaders. The

in his *Portraiture of Methodism*, p. 77. "About five thousand became a separate party. For fear of a larger division, the conference agreed to make considerable sacrifices: the preachers resigning considerable portions of power, respecting temporal matters; division of circuits; receiving and excluding members; the appointment and removal of leaders, stewards and local preachers." The conference say, in their address to the societies: "We trust, that on a serious consideration of the regulations we have agreed to at this conference, you will see that the sacrifices in respect to authority, which we have made on the part of the whole body of travelling preachers, evidences our willingness to meet our brethren in every thing, which is consistent with the existence of the Methodist discipline, and a readiness to be their servants for Jesus' sake."

#### PLAN OF PACIFICATION. 1797.

##### I. *In respect to Finances or Money matters.*

1. We have determined to publish annually a very minute account of the disbursement, or application of the yearly collection: and,

2. A full account of the affairs of Kingswood school.

3. That all the bills for the support of travelling preachers and their families, in respect to deficiencies, house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expenses, and all other matters of a temporal kind, for their support, for which the circuits cannot provide, shall first meet with the

leaders' meeting nominates the stewards; and the society confirms or rejects the nomination. The quarterly meetings are composed of the general stewards and representatives chosen by the different societies of the circuits, and the fourth quarterly meeting of the year appoints the preacher and delegate of every circuit that shall attend the Annual Conference.

approbation of the quarterly meeting, and be signed by the general steward of the circuit before they can be brought to the district committee.

II. *In respect to all other Temporal matters.*

1. It has been determined, that no circuits shall be divided till such division has been approved of by their respective quarterly meetings, and signed by the general stewards.

2. That no other temporal matter shall be transacted by the district committees, till the approbation of the respective quarterly meetings be first given, signed by the circuit stewards.

III. *In respect to the receiving and excluding Private Members of the society.*

1. The leaders' meeting shall have a right to declare any person, on trial, improper to be received into the society; and after such declaration, the superintendent shall not admit such person into society.

2. No person shall be expelled from the society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a leaders' meeting.

IV. *In respect to the appointment and removal of Leaders, Stewards, and Local Preachers, and concerning Meetings.*

1. No person shall be appointed a leader or steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the leaders' meeting; the nomination to be in the superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the leaders' meeting.

2. The former rule concerning local preachers is confirmed, viz. that no person shall receive a plan as a local preacher, without the approbation of a local preachers' meeting.

3. In compliance with a request made by the committee of persons from various parts, namely, "that the conference be requested to re-consider and revise those rules which relate to the calling of meetings, and appointing local preachers, made last year, we say : no local preacher shall be permitted to preach in any other circuit than his own, without producing a recommendation from the superintendent of the circuit in which he lives ; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, but from men in office, who act in conjunction with the superintendent of that circuit which he visits. The design of this rule is to prevent any, under the character of local preachers, from burdening the people, either by collecting money, or by living upon them ; and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting local preachers thus to visit them. But it never was intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the local preachers, whom, considered as a body, we greatly respect. And it should not be lost sight of, that several of the most respectable local preachers in the kingdom, who were in the committee which met the committee of preachers appointed by the conference, declared their high approbation of the rule, and desired that it might be strengthened as much as possible, as none could justly complain of it.

4. As the committee above-mentioned requested also, that the minutes of the last conference concerning the calling of meetings to consider of the affairs of the society or connexion, be explained ; and as we are exceedingly desirous of preserving the peace and union of the whole body, we have agreed upon the following explanation : viz.

(1.) As the leaders' meeting is the proper meeting for the society, and the quarterly meeting for the circuit, we think that other formal meetings, in general, would be

contrary to the Methodist economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences. But,

(2.) In order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our societies, we allow that other formal meetings may be held, if they first receive the approbation of the superintendent, and the leaders' or quarterly meeting; provided also, that the superintendent, if he please, be present at every such meeting.

5. We have selected all our ancient rules, which were made before the death of our late venerable father in the gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which are essential rules, or prudential at this present time; and have solemnly signed them, declaring our approbation of them, and determination to comply with them; one single preacher excepted, who in consequence, withdrew from us.

6. We have determined that all the rules which relate to the societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and quarterly meetings, shall be published with the rules of the society, for the benefit and convenience of all the members.

*V. In respect to all new rules, which shall be made by the Conference.*

It is determined, that if at any time the conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the societies at large, and such rule shall be objected to, at the first quarterly meeting in any given circuit; and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, be of opinion, that the enforcing of such rule in that circuit, will be injurious to the prosperity of that circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such quarterly meeting, before the second conference. But, if the rule be confirmed by the second conference, it shall be binding to the whole connexion. Nevertheless, the quarterly meetings, rejecting a new rule, shall not by publications, public

meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention, but shall strive, by every means, to preserve the peace of the connexion.

Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings.

*Minutes of the British Conference, Vol. 1, page 374, 1797.*

In relation to the demands made by the reformers in their memorials, &c. for "Delegates chosen by the people, to attend the district meetings and the conference, possessed of equal powers with the preachers, in every respect," the conference replied, "that they cannot admit any but regular travelling preachers into their body, either in conference, or at district meetings." This declaration, and the subsequent practice of the English conference, is attempted to be justified in the British Methodist Magazine for August 1825, on the score of the *legal* character of the conference. It is officially said, that; "It is not in fact *possible*, (to admit lay-representation,) because the conference has a fixed *legal* character, in which the settlement of the chapels is involved; and, therefore, the body has been necessarily compelled to seek the *real advantages of check, and control* in another way."

By the above plan of pacification it will be seen, that *Methodism* after the decease of Mr. Wesley, was no longer *Wesleyan Methodism*,\* the plan having introduced highly important changes in favour of Christian liberty, and presented the government of the Methodist

\*The reader will perceive that when we speak of Methodism, we allude to the system by which Methodists have been governed, and not to the doctrines or modes of worship, these have been pretty much the same under all changes of the government.

societies in a new and improved aspect. Yet the plan was not satisfactory at the time of its establishment, nor will it ever meet the entire approval of English Methodists until a *lay representation* is introduced into the conference on the part of the societies, possessed of equal powers with the preachers. Mr. Robinson, in his letter to the superintendent of Hull circuit, dated, Beverly, 23d March, 1824, twenty-seven years after the adoption of the plan, says, "I trust that you will distinctly understand, that *representation* in the conference, is the only immediate measure for which I contend; believing that it would eventually remove all, or most, of what I conceive to be objectionable in our connexion; and my being known to be attached to the principles of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, will not, I trust, be a matter of objection against me. I am advocating what I conceive to be the just rights of the people; and I cannot overlook the fact, that tens of thousands in these kingdoms, who hold the religious doctrines of the Methodists, think, in this respect, as I do; and what increases the probability that we are right, is, that the whole of the dissenters in England, Ireland, and Scotland, as well as the whole body of the clergy, with great numbers of our most respectable members and hearers, entertain the same opinions."

It will appear by the above extract from Mr. Robinson's letter, that the question on lay representation was still the exciting theme among the English Methodists as late as 1824, twenty-seven years after the conference plan of pacification was published. During the whole of that period, efforts were made to induce the conference to admit lay representatives, and secession followed secession. The most recent accounts from England



prove, that this claim is still pressed, and secessions continue. It is asserted by a late writer, that there is in England, at the present time, not less than one hundred thousand dissenters from the old Wesleyan stock; yet, notwithstanding, the dissatisfaction that prevails, and the several secessions which have taken place, the preachers hold on to their claim of unlimited power, even in the face of the plan of pacification adopted in 1797. We have a pamphlet before us, printed in London, 1829, and signed by a committee of twelve persons, which charges the leading preachers with the exercise of *absolute power independently of the circuit or local authorities*. We will only extract a single page from this work; and we do this principally, because allusion is made to a claim set up by the American General Conference held in Pittsburg, May, 1828. And adopted by the British Conference in that same year. The writer says, "We contrast this warning voice (Mr. Pawson's) with the echo by the last conference (1828) of another voice from *America*, sounding forth the old popish *jus divinum*; claiming for the ministry, *exclusively*, as of *divine right*, and without any authoritative control from the Church itself, not merely the administration, but the sole right of expounding and maintaining. 1. *Gospel Doctrines*; that is, a right to preach and teach whatever they may please to admit into their creed as Gospel Doctrines. 2. *Ordinances*; that is, to set up whatever worship, sacraments, and services, they may deem conformable to the Gospel; and 3. *Moral Discipline*; that is, to admit and expel, censure and suspend, to set up and put down, whomsoever they please in the Church of God, and for whatever causes to them shall seem meet. Now, here we think there is not only some-



thing, but a great deal that is not only *new* in Methodism, but directly contrary to the Plan of Pacification. When we contrast this [plan] with your *new* claim, to be considered as the divinely authorized expounders of gospel doctrines, ordinances, and discipline; and hear you make it a matter of conscience, not to admit any authoritative interference of the Church, we cannot but exclaim, like Mr. Pawson, ‘Remember, O ye Methodists! that it was after the clergy had established those claims over the primitive Church, that they introduced the *doctrine* of transubstantiation and saint worship; the *ordinances* of the Mass, and the *discipline* of the Inquisition! In the name, therefore, of Him, who bought you with his blood, maintain your rights and privileges.”

*Signed by the Committee of Twelve.*

---

### CHAPTER III.

COMMENCEMENT OF METHODISM IN NORTH AMERICA.—

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MR. WESLEY'S AUTHORITY  
IN THIS COUNTRY, 1773.—THE ORDINATIONS, 1784.—

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH, 1792.

A considerable number of persons who had been members of Mr. Wesley's societies in England and Ireland, emigrated to this country at different periods, and settled in several of the provinces. Those in Maryland, residing near Pipe Creek, in Frederick county, were united in a society, in 1765, by Robert Strawbridge, a

local preacher from Ireland, a zealous and useful man. In a short time, these people put up what is called the Log Meeting House, near Pipe Creek. Mr. Asbury used to call it "*the old hive.*"

About the same time, Philip Embury, a local preacher, also from Ireland, formed a society of his own countrymen, in New York; and, in 1768, by the assistance and influence of Captain Webb, the society purchased a lot of ground on John street, for the purpose of building a house for public worship, which was soon erected, and opened for divine service. Mr. Embury preached the dedication sermon. Captain Webb, though a British officer, was a zealous and useful preacher among the Methodists. He occasionally preached in New York, and Philadelphia with great effect. Induced by his success and an ardent desire to save souls, he wrote to Mr. Wesley, earnestly pressing him to send over missionaries to aid in carrying on the work of God. Accordingly Mr. Wesley appointed Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore missionaries for America. These preachers landed at Philadelphia in the fall of 1769. Mr. Pilmore visited and preached in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. Two years after the arrival of these first missionaries, Mr. Wesley sent over Francis Asbury and Richard Wright to their assistance. Robert Williams, a local preacher from England, had previously arrived, and associated himself with Robert Strawbridge, and commenced his labours in Maryland, and afterwards extended them, as a travelling preacher to Virginia. Soon after this, John King, a young man from London, arrived, and commenced preaching, though not licensed, in Potters Field, near Philadelphia. Afterwards, he obtained license to go down to Wilmington,

thing, but a great deal that is not only *new* in Methodism, but directly contrary to the Plan of Pacification. When we contrast this [plan] with your *new* claim, to be considered as the divinely authorized expounders of gospel doctrines, ordinances, and discipline; and hear you make it a matter of conscience, not to admit any authoritative interference of the Church, we cannot but exclaim, like Mr. Pawson, ‘Remember, O ye Methodists! that it was after the clergy had established those claims over the primitive Church, that they introduced the *doctrine* of transubstantiation and saint worship; the *ordinances* of the Mass, and the *discipline* of the Inquisition! In the name, therefore, of Him, who bought you with his blood, maintain your rights and privileges.’”

*Signed by the Committee of Twelve.*

---

### CHAPTER III.

COMMENCEMENT OF METHODISM IN NORTH AMERICA.—

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MR. WESLEY'S AUTHORITY  
IN THIS COUNTRY, 1773.—THE ORDINATIONS, 1784.—

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH, 1792.

A considerable number of persons who had been members of Mr. Wesley's societies in England and Ireland, emigrated to this country at different periods, and settled in several of the provinces. Those in Maryland, residing near Pipe Creek, in Frederick county, were united in a society, in 1765, by Robert Strawbridge, a

local preacher from Ireland, a zealous and useful man. In a short time, these people put up what is called the Log Meeting House, near Pipe Creek. Mr. Asbury used to call it "*the old hive.*"

About the same time, Philip Embury, a local preacher, also from Ireland, formed a society of his own countrymen, in New York; and, in 1768, by the assistance and influence of Captain Webb, the society purchased a lot of ground on John street, for the purpose of building a house for public worship, which was soon erected, and opened for divine service. Mr. Embury preached the dedication sermon. Captain Webb, though a British officer, was a zealous and useful preacher among the Methodists. He occasionally preached in New York, and Philadelphia with great effect. Induced by his success and an ardent desire to save souls, he wrote to Mr. Wesley, earnestly pressing him to send over missionaries to aid in carrying on the work of God. Accordingly Mr. Wesley appointed Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore missionaries for America. These preachers landed at Philadelphia in the fall of 1769. Mr. Pilmore visited and preached in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. Two years after the arrival of these first missionaries, Mr. Wesley sent over Francis Asbury and Richard Wright to their assistance. Robert Williams, a local preacher from England, had previously arrived, and associated himself with Robert Strawbridge, and commenced his labours in Maryland, and afterwards extended them, as a travelling preacher to Virginia. Soon after this, John King, a young man from London, arrived, and commenced preaching, though not licensed, in Potters Field, near Philadelphia. Afterwards, he obtained license to go down to Wilmington,

in Delaware, and exhort among a few people who were seeking religion, and soon became a travelling preacher.

During this incipient stage of Methodism, the business of the societies appears to have been done at the circuit quarterly meetings. One of which was begun on Tuesday, December 23, on the Western Shore of Maryland. The following piece of history of that quarterly meeting is furnished by Jesse Lee, in his history of the Methodists, page 41. "How are the preachers stationed? Three on the Eastern Shore, two in Frederick, and Mr. Asbury in Baltimore. Then they asked, Will the people be contented without our administering the sacraments? John King was neuter; Mr. Strawbridge plead for the ordinances, and so did the people, who appeared to have been much biased by him. But Mr. Asbury would not agree to it at that time." It appears that there were only three preachers present. Mr. Strawbridge, Mr. Asbury and John King—and that the people participated in the consultations. Mr. Lee says, the business was mostly done in this way at the quarterly meetings, there being no regular conferences.

In the spring of 1773, Mr. Wesley sent two additional preachers to America. Thomas Rankin and George Shadford. Immediately on Mr. Rankin's arrival in Philadelphia he called the travelling preachers together on the 14th of July, 1773, he having been appointed by Mr. Wesley, *general Assistant*, with special instructions, which is evident from his manner of proceeding.

I. He assembled in this first regular conference, none but those who were considered to be travelling preachers; neither local preachers nor any of the people were present. Mr. Lee says, "there were six or seven tra-

velling preachers present, most of whom were Europeans." Thomas Rankin, George Shadford, John King, Francis Asbury, Richard Wright, Robert Williams and Richard Boardman, constituted the conference.

II. He propounded the three following questions, all of which were answered in the affirmative.

1. Ought not the authority of Mr. Wesley and the English Conference, to extend to the preachers and people in America, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland?

2. Ought not the doctrines and discipline of the Methodists, as contained in the English minutes to be the rule of our conduct, who labour in connexion with Mr. Wesley?

3. If so, does it not follow, that if preachers deviate from the minutes, we can have no fellowship with them till they change their conduct?

These queries were doubtless prepared by Mr. Wesley himself, previously to Mr. Rankin's leaving England, and were designed to be the basis on which he would govern the societies in this country by means of his general assistant or superintendent.

A rule was passed at the same conference strictly forbidding all the preachers from administering the Lord's Supper and baptism. And the people were required to attend the Church and receive the ordinances there..

Here then, we have the origin and establishment of Mr. Wesley's exclusive system of absolute itinerancy planted by the hands of Mr. Rankin, his general assistant, aided by six European preachers. The local preachers and all the lay-members being left out; and a system of government fastened upon their necks, without their consent, and doubtless without their knowledge. Methodism, therefore, in America, by this decisive act

in Delaware, and exhort among a few people who were seeking religion, and soon became a travelling preacher.

During this incipient stage of Methodism, the business of the societies appears to have been done at the circuit quarterly meetings. One of which was begun on Tuesday, December 23, on the Western Shore of Maryland. The following piece of history of that quarterly meeting is furnished by Jesse Lee, in his history of the Methodists, page 41. "How are the preachers stationed? Three on the Eastern Shore, two in Frederick, and Mr. Asbury in Baltimore. Then they asked, Will the people be contented without our administering the sacraments? John King was neuter; Mr. Strawbridge plead for the ordinances, and so did the people, who appeared to have been much biased by him. But Mr. Asbury would not agree to it at that time." It appears that there were only three preachers present. Mr. Strawbridge, Mr. Asbury and John King—and that the people participated in the consultations. Mr. Lee says, the business was mostly done in this way at the quarterly meetings, there being no regular conferences.

In the spring of 1773, Mr. Wesley sent two additional preachers to America. Thomas Rankin and George Shadford. Immediately on Mr. Rankin's arrival in Philadelphia he called the travelling preachers together on the 14th of July, 1773, he having been appointed by Mr. Wesley, *general Assistant*, with special instructions, which is evident from his manner of proceeding.

I. He assembled in this first regular conference, none but those who were considered to be travelling preachers; neither local preachers nor any of the people were present. Mr. Lee says, "there were six or seven tra-



velling preachers present, most of whom were Europeans." Thomas Rankin, George Shadford, John King, Francis Asbury, Richard Wright, Robert Williams and Richard Boardman, constituted the conference.

II. He propounded the three following questions, all of which were answered in the affirmative.

1. Ought not the authority of Mr. Wesley and the English Conference, to extend to the preachers and people in America, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland?

2. Ought not the doctrines and discipline of the Methodists, as contained in the English minutes to be the rule of our conduct, who labour in connexion with Mr. Wesley?

3. If so, does it not follow, that if preachers deviate from the minutes, we can have no fellowship with them till they change their conduct?

These queries were doubtless prepared by Mr. Wesley himself, previously to Mr. Rankin's leaving England, and were designed to be the basis on which he would govern the societies in this country by means of his general assistant or superintendent.

A rule was passed at the same conference strictly forbidding all the preachers from administering the Lord's Supper and baptism. And the people were required to attend the Church and receive the ordinances there..

Here then, we have the origin and establishment of Mr. Wesley's exclusive system of absolute itinerancy planted by the hands of Mr. Rankin, his general assistant, aided by six European preachers. The local preachers and all the lay-members being left out; and a system of government fastened upon their necks, without their consent, and doubtless without their knowledge. Methodism, therefore, in America, by this decisive act



of Mr. Rankin, under the instructions of Mr. Wesley, became "Wesleyan Methodism" in government, doctrine and discipline.

Mr. Rankin held a regular conference every year, in the month of May, for four successive years, but in September, 1777, he left the country on account of the war, and returned to England. And by 1778, all the English travelling preachers had followed him except Mr. Asbury, and he was obliged to lie by at Thomas White's in Delaware. The regular annual conference for May, 1778, however, was held at Leesburg, Virginia, without the presence of the general assistant, who had returned to England. Four of the Northern circuits, New York, Philadelphia, Chester, Frederick, and also Norfolk, were left out of the list on account of the difficulties occasioned by the war, and there were only twenty-nine preachers to supply the remaining seventeen circuits. At this conference the subject of ordination was freely agitated among the preachers; and, at the following conference, which met in Fluvania county, '79, at the Broken Back Church, the preachers introduced ordination among themselves on presbyterial principles, as the people, in general, were clamorous for the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. "The preachers thus ordained," says Jesse Lee, "went forth preaching the gospel in their circuits as formerly, and administering the sacraments wherever they went. Most of our preachers in the South fell in with this new plan; and as the leaders of the party were very zealous, and the greater part of them very pious men, the private members were influenced by them, and pretty generally fell in with their measures. However, some of the old Methodists would not commune with them, but steadily

adhered to their former customs. The preachers North of Virginia, were opposed to this step, so hastily taken by their brethren in the South, and made a stand against it, believing that unless a stop could be put to this new mode of proceeding, a separation would take place among the preachers and the people. The preachers in the South were very successful in their ministerial labours, and many souls were brought to God in the latter part of that year; and the christians were very lively in religion. These things all united to confirm the preachers in the belief, that the step they had taken was owned and honoured of God. And at that time there was very little room to hope, that they would ever recede from their new plan, in which they were so well established. But after all, they consented for the sake of peace, and the union of the body of Methodists, to drop the ordinances for a season, till Mr. Wesley could be consulted." Lee's His. p. 70.

As the manner in which this final determination of the conference was brought about is interesting to the general reader, we will detail it briefly. About a month before the regular meeting of the conference for 1780, Mr. Asbury, who now began to venture out from his retreat, assembled the Northern preachers who were opposed to the ordination business, in Baltimore; and passed a sentence of disapprobation on the conduct of the Southern brethren, and concluded that they could not look upon the Virginia preachers as Methodists in connection with Mr. Wesley, nor would they acknowledge them as such, unless they should renounce their ordinations. Mr. Asbury, Freeborn Garrettson and William Waters then proceeded to the conference in Virginia, to use their influence to induce the conference to

retrace its steps. "The most influential preachers in the conference favourable to the ordinances were Philip Gatch, John Dickens and James O'Kelly, men much respected for their usefulness in the ministry." Lee's His. p. 73.

After much "contention and distress," Mr. Asbury proposed the following plan to the conference.

1. That the ordinances should not be administered for twelve months. 2. That the next conference should be held in Baltimore. And 3. That in the course of the year they would write to Mr. Wesley, and lay their situation before him, and obtain his advice. The plan was accepted by the southern preachers and adopted, and the conference adjourned to meet in Baltimore on the 24th of April, 1781. Here again, however, as before the conference of 1780, Mr. Asbury and a few northern preachers, about a month before the conference, according to Mr. Lee's history, "held a *little conference* in Delaware State, near Choptank, to make some arrangements for those preachers who could not go with them, and then adjourned, as they *called it*, to Baltimore." There can be no question, but that the *real* design of this "*little conference*" was to prepare and mature a plan for the complete discomfiture of the southern preachers at the approaching conference in Baltimore. But the southern preachers did not attend; the leading preachers from the south were all absent. There must have been some good reason for this; but Mr. Lee and the minutes are quite silent on the cause of their absence. The following year, 1782, there were two conferences held, one in Virginia in April, and one in Baltimore in May, and this practice was continued,

for several years. No further information is given in relation to the administration of the ordinances.

In the fall of 1784, Mr. Wesley, with the assistance of Dr. Coke and Mr. Creighton, ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, elders for America, and in a formal manner, resembling an episcopal ordination, set apart Dr. Coke as a "superintendent" over the societies in these United States, and gave him a letter of recommendation to the American brethren, and instructions, to set apart Francis Asbury "a joint superintendent" with himself. The Doctor and his colleagues, Whatcoat and Vasey, sailed from Bristol, September 18th, 1784, and landed at New York the 3d of November following. Dr. Coke, leaving his two companions in New York, hurried on to Delaware, and on the 14th met with Mr. Asbury and about fifteen preachers holding a quarterly meeting at Barrett's Chapel, Kent county, Delaware. It was there determined by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to assemble as many of the preachers as could be collected to an extra conference in Baltimore, and carry out the ordination scheme. "Freeborn Garrettson undertook to travel to the south, in order to give notice to all the travelling preachers of this intended meeting, but being fond of preaching by the way, and thinking he could do the business by writing, he did not give timely notice to the preachers, who were in the extremes of the work; and, of course, several of them were not at the conference." Lee's History, p. 94.

The conference assembled about Christmas, and the preachers were made acquainted with what Mr. Wesley had done in view of furnishing the people with the ordinances, and such other matters as Dr. Coke had to

communicate. Mr. Asbury was ordained Deacon on the 25th, Elder on the 26th, and Superintendent on the 27th of December. Freeborn Garrettson, John Hager-ty, Nelson Reed, James O'Kelly, Henry Willis, and a few other were ordained Elders: and John Dietrius, Ignatius Pigman, and Caleb Boyer, were ordained Deacons. Mr. Asbury declined ordination as *Superintendent*, unless he were voted in by the conference, which was immediately done. Mr. Otterbine, a German Minister, assisted in his ordination.

The following declaration was then made by the conference:

"During the life of the Reverend Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church government, to obey his commands. And we do engage after his death, to do every thing that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America, and the political interests of these States, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe."

By the minutes it would seem, that the preachers present, were under the impression, that they had formed themselves into a Methodist Episcopal Church under the authority of Mr. Wesley and his superintendents, but we shall subsequently, shew that their Church organization did not take place until the first General Conference, after the ordinations, which was held in 1792.

A diversity of opinion prevails in regard to Mr. Wesley's design in setting apart Dr. Coke "as a *superintendent* by the imposition of hands and prayer." Some assert that he intended to raise the Doctor from the *order* of presbyter in the Church of England, to the

order of bishop. Mr. Charles Wesley was of this opinion and ridiculed the act; and blamed his brother seriously for assuming, as he conceived, episcopal authority. Dr. Whitehead, Mr. Wesley's biographer, was of the same opinion; and has taken great pains to prove what no one doubts, that Mr. Wesley had no legal nor clerical right to ordain *episcopally*; and, viewing things in this light, he declares the transaction illegal and invalid.

Others are of the opinion, that Mr. Wesley did not design to raise Dr. Coke to the order of bishop, but simply, in a formal manner, to designate him as his "*superintendent*" to take charge of his societies, in these United States. In proof of this they adduce Mr. Wesley's letter to Mr. Asbury dated London, Sept. 20, 1788, four years after the ordination, in which he says: "How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a *bishop*! I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call me a knave, or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me a *bishop*! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this."\* And, furthermore, they say, that when Dr. Coke returned to England, after ordaining Mr. Asbury a "joint superintendent," in obedience to Mr. Wesley's directions, he was not recognized as a bishop nor acknowledged by Mr. Wesley himself, nor any of the English Methodist preachers, as clothed with *episcopal* authority, or as sustaining a more elevated grade than any other presbyter of the Church of England. And, furthermore, that Mr. Wesley's design was either misunderstood, or perverted by those to

\*See Coke and Moor's life of Wesley.

whom he had entrusted the highly important work of furnishing the societies in these United States with the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, at the hands of their own ministers.

On a careful examination of the whole question, we have adopted the latter opinion—that Mr. Wesley did *not* intend to constitute Dr. Coke a bishop, nor to authorize him to set apart Mr. Asbury to the office of bishop. We cannot bring our mind to believe Mr. Wesley capable of so much duplicity in a case of such vital importance to all concerned. It is of small moment what course Mr. Wesley thought proper to adopt in his designation of Dr. Coke to the office of “superintendent,” whether judicious or injudicious—legal or illegal—scriptural or unscriptural, his letter to Mr. Asbury, as above quoted, proves most conclusively, that he did *not* design to constitute Dr. Coke a bishop, nor to authorize him to set apart Mr. Asbury for the office of bishop. Let the misunderstanding or perversion of design rest where they may, Mr. Wesley's own most solemn declaration, written four years after the appointment of Dr. Coke to the office of “superintendent,” must be received as the most conclusive testimony in the case.

This being admitted, it follows, that Methodist ordination from Mr. Wesley down to the present day, is *presbyterial*, or an ordination by the imposition of the hands of presbyters or elders. It can be nothing else, nor is it within the power of human ingenuity by sophistical reasonings, or bold declamation, to make it any thing else. If it be not this, it is nothing valid. There is one other fact, in relation to this matter which very conclusively proves, that the preachers who composed the General



Conference of 1784, viewed the ordination of Mr. Asbury as *presbyterial*. In the minutes of that conference it is asked, "If by death, expulsion or otherwise there be no *superintendent* remaining in our Church what shall we do?" Answer. "The conference shall elect a superintendent, *and the elders, or any three of them*, shall ordain him." This would be, unquestionably, a presbyterial ordination, that is, an ordination by elders; and, the conference must have viewed this mode of ordaining a superintendent as equivalent to Mr. Wesley's ordination of Dr. Coke.

The year following the ordinations, Mr. Asbury selected several elders, and gave each the oversight of several circuits, with power to direct all the preachers in their respective districts, during his absence. This was the origin of the presiding elder office, although not known by that name at the time. About three years after, (1789,) Mr. Asbury aided by his presiding elders formed the council plan. The council was composed of the superintendent, who had now styled himself *bishop*, and the presiding elders.

The authority of the council extended to all matters and things which the bishop and presiding elders, in council assembled, might judge expedient to be done for the good of the societies, and preachers. "The council shall have authority to mature every thing they shall judge expedient. 1. To preserve the general union. 2. To render and preserve the external form of worship similar in all our societies throughout the continent. 3. To preserve the essentials of the Methodist doctrines and discipline pure and uncorrupted. 4. To correct all abuses and disorders; and lastly, they are authorised to mature *every thing* they may see necessary for the good



of the Church, and for promoting and improving our college and plan of education." Min. of Council. This assumption of plenary power, came fully up to all that Mr. Wesley ever laid claim to. The only difference between this system and his, was, that his was a monarchy, and this was an aristocracy. But the seeds of its own dissolution was sown in it by a provision which required the assent of a majority of the preachers in an annual conference, before any law of the council could be carried into force within the said conference district. This provision blew up the council in less than two years. Nothing could be done satisfactorily; and, moreover, the preachers viewed the council as a dangerous aristocracy, calculated, if not designed to enslave them forever. They, therefore, opposed it with great decision, and Mr. Asbury was compelled to dissolve it after its first session, which was held in Baltimore.

Here we are in conscience compelled to say, in justice to Mr. Asbury, that he alone is not to be blamed as the *sole* author of the council plan. It is credibly asserted by those who were conversant with the presiding elders of the time, that a majority of those good men, were decidedly in favour of a strong aristocracy, and loved to exercise authority as much as Mr. Asbury; and were, consequently, entitled to a share of the obloquy cast on Mr. Asbury for this high handed measure.

The council being dissolved, the preachers were much elated with their victory over Mr. Asbury and his presiding elders; but they soon discovered that a very exceptional part of the council plan was retained. The presiding elders, who were all appointed by the bishop, were retained as his *privy council*, and assisted in sta-

tioning the preachers. Upon this power, the preachers determined to have some safe check.

This question, and the necessity of having some regular organization, produced what Jesse Lee properly calls the "*first regular General Conference.*"

"On the first day of November, 1792, the first regular General Conference began in Baltimore, and the preachers who had been received into full connexion, came together from all parts of the United States, where we had any circuits formed, with an expectation that something of great importance would take place in the connexion in consequence of that conference." Lee's His. p. 177.

That during the previous eight years, namely, from the time of the first ordinations, he says, "Our form of discipline had been changed and altered in so many particulars; and the business of the council had thrown the connexion into such confusion, that we thought proper at this conference to take under consideration the greater part of our form of discipline, and either abolish, establish, or change the rules." Page 193.

From this first regular General Conference we date the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Previously to the death of Mr. Wesley, the Methodists in this country were societies under his direction, and the conference of 1784, fully acknowledged his authority. It is, therefore, difficult to conceive how those societies could be viewed as constituting an *independent episcopal Church*, while they remained under the authority of Mr. Wesley, a *presbyter* in the Church of England. But in 1792, the year after Mr. Wesley's decease, all connexion with Mr. Wesley and the Methodists in Europe, had ceased—the council plan had been overturned, and the

preachers assembled at that General Conference for the purpose of forming something stable, which would harmonise the connexion. At this conference the episcopacy was fully recognized, with its appendage of presiding elders. The old rules of discipline were revised, and several new rules passed. Here then, with great propriety, we may date the commencement of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

At this conference the following resolution was brought forward by Mr. O'Kelly and Mr. McKendree : "Resolved, that after the bishop appoints the preachers at conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the conference, and state his objections; and if the conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit." This motion produced a protracted debate, and the question, for a long time appeared of doubtful issue, though at first, Mr. Lee says, a large majority of the preachers appeared to be in favour of the motion. On the last day of the debate, in the evening at a late hour, the question was taken and the appeal lost. The next morning, Mr. O'Kelly, Mr. McKendree and several other preachers, sent into the the conference a letter of resignation and withdrawal, and in a few days retired to their homes. The preachers in favour of curtailing the power of the bishop, did not, however, rest satisfied under this defeat, but opened a new attack on the episcopacy. As they could obtain no appeal from the bishop's appointments, they contended for some share in the appointment of the presiding elders, who, as the bishop's counsellors and assistants, exercised great influence over their destinies. This question was maturing and gaining friends for several

years, but was not brought fairly out until the General Conference of 1800, and was continued with different degrees of excitement during the remainder of Mr. Asbury's life. And after his decease in 1816, it increased in interest and became more decided, which will be noticed in its proper place.

After the rise of the General Conference of 1792, and the publication of what had been done, there was great dissatisfaction among the local preachers and the people. They viewed the government as settled on the principles of an absolute *hierarchy*, and the whole body of the membership and local ministry shut out from all participation in the government of the new Church. Mr. Lee says; "Some of them contended that the local preachers ought to have a seat and a vote in all our conferences; and others said, there ought to be a delegation of lay members." Page 213.

This said question of a lay representation was, at this time, agitating the Methodist societies in England, and finally resulted in the plan of pacification as we have shewn in a preceding chapter. As the question of lay representation is of vital interest to every Christian Church, and the act of withholding or denying the right has been productive of much dissatisfaction and serious divisions and separations from the Methodists in England and in this country, we will devote the succeeding chapter to an investigation of the subject.

## CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS ON THE EXCLUSION OF THE LAITY FROM  
THE COUNCILS OF THE M. E. CHURCH.

IT was a great and inexcusable error, and a palpable violation of right, to exclude the laity or people from all participation in the legislative, executive and judicial departments of the government. It was neither safe nor proper for the preachers to assume a character and responsibility not accorded to them as ministers of the Gospel, by the great Head of the Church, nor warranted by apostolic example. No position is susceptible of clearer proof than that the laity in the primitive, apostolic Church, exercised in common with the ministry, the legislative and executive authority. All ecclesiastical writers concur in the declaration, that, during the three first centuries, the people had a personal, or a representative concurrence in all the official transactions of the Churches. Mosheim, who is admitted on all hands to be the very best authority, says: "The people were undoubtedly the first in authority; for the Apostles shewed, by *their own example*, that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly," and in proof he cites Acts 1, 15.—6, 3.—15, 4.—23.

The first passage cited, Acts, chap. 1, verse 15, relates to the election of an Apostle, to take the place of Judas. In this most important transaction, the people had a personal voice and free suffrage. The number of believers at the time was "about an hundred and twenty." Peter stood up in the midst of these, and related

the defection, fall and fate of Judas; and pointed out the necessity of selecting one from among their number, who had been an eye-witness of all the actions of Christ, from his baptism by John till his ascension. And they appointed two, Justus and Matthias; and they prayed for Divine direction, "and gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles."

The second passage cited by Mosheim, Acts, chap. 6, verse 3, relates to the choice of the seven deacons. The entire passage reads; "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch. Whom they set before the Apostles; and when they had prayed they laid their hands on them." Here then, the people, at the instance of the Apostles, chose seven Church officers, and designated them to office by prayer and the imposition of hands.

The third passage cited by Mosheim, Acts, chap. 15, 4—23, relates to the settlement of the question on circumcision. Whoever reads this account, will perceive;

that the assembly at Jerusalem was composed of the *apostles* and *elders* and *people*,—that they were mutually engaged in the discussion of the subject under consideration—that the acts of selecting and sending the messengers were the common acts of the *whole assembly*—and that the address of the letters recognizes three distinct classes of persons as their writers, “*apostles*,” “*elders*” and “*brethren*,” constituting “the whole Church,” or as we say, all the male members. Now, what gives greater weight to this transaction is, the question under discussion was not one pertaining to mere *human* regulations, for the government of the brethren interested; but, it was a question that had for its object the settlement of a *doctrinal principle*, which involved consequences of vast importance to the gentile converts. The question was, whether a gentile believer could be saved simply by faith in Christ, without attending to the ceremonies of the law; or, whether it was necessary for all such converts to add to their faith a strict observance of the Jewish ritual. This question, with all its consequences, was submitted to the consideration and decision of the whole Church at Jerusalem, which proves most conclusively, that the people were allowed by the Apostles themselves to take part, not only in the election of Church officers, but also in the settlement of doctrinal questions.

The fourth passage adduced, Acts, chap. 21, verse 22, relates to the investigation of Paul’s doctrine, by the whole Church at Jerusalem. “What is it, therefore,” said the Apostle James, and all the elders who were present at the interview with Paul, when he had returned on a visit to Jerusalem; “What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come.”



After citing the above passages, our historian proceeds. "It was, therefore, the assembly of the *people* which chose their own rulers and teachers, or received them by a free and authoritative consent, when recommended by others. The same *people* rejected or confirmed by their suffrage, the laws that were proposed by their rulers to the assembly; excommunicated profligate and unworthy members of the Church;\* restored the penitents to their forfeited privileges; passed judgments upon the different subjects of controversy and dissension that arose in their community; examined and decided the disputes which happened between the elders and deacons; and in a word, exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power." Mosheim.

The same writer adds, that when councils were introduced, in the second century, according to the analogy of civil governments, especially the confederacies of Greece, the laity had a proportionate representation in the Church legislature; and it was not, according to ecclesiastical historians, until the third century, when the form of Church government was corrupted and changed into a clerical monarchy by the encroachments of the ministry, that the rights of the people were neglected and abused. Mosheim.

At the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country, 1785, the admission of lay-representatives was not even made a question, but accorded as a matter of obvious, Scripture right. Lay-delegates were, therefore, appointed in conjunction with the ministers to frame a constitution, and enact canons

\* See Paul's directions to the Corinthian Church concerning the incestuous person. 1 Cor. chap. 5, verses 4, 7, 13.



or rules for the government of the Church; and by these the laity are fully secured in their right of participation in all acts of future legislation. It is much to be regretted, that Mr. Asbury and his associates did not imitate this correct example set them by the Protestant Episcopalians. We should, in all probability, have escaped those subsequent commotions which have lead to the division and separation of the great Methodist family in this country. What makes the error on the part of Mr. Asbury and his associates the more inexcusable, is, that at the time, nearly all the preachers were *Americans*, and many of them well versed in ecclesiastical history. They must have known that the laity had a right to representation; and, that "no religious man or body of men, can, with a good conscience, withhold what is the right of another to possess." In 1784, Mr. Asbury and all the preachers were under Mr. Wesley's government, and Mr. Wesley could have recalled Mr. Asbury had he attempted any considerable innovations; but Mr. Wesley was now dead and his authority had ceased, and the preachers were at full liberty to frame a liberal system of Church government, if they had been so disposed. It has been urged, however, in justification of this anomalous organization, that all rights are originally in the travelling ministry—that the preachers existed before the people, and called them to repentance and faith, and then placed them into societies under their own control; and, that when it was thought expedient to introduce certain changes, the same hands that framed the government had a right to introduce changes or even to remodde the whole system, if they saw proper, without consulting the people or of assigning to them any part in the new administration. The ground here taken is

utterly untenable, and in direct opposition to the Scriptures, and at variance with the well known facts in the case.

The Apostles were before the believers at Jerusalem, for they had called them to repentance and faith, and formed them into a Church. But the Apostles claimed no right on this ground to exclusive government. They identified the people with themselves in all important Church acts, as we have shewn from Mosheim and the Scriptures. So that Apostolic example, is in opposition to the claims set forth in the above plea. Moreover, it is *not true* that the itinerant preachers were before the people. The people were actually before the preachers. Strawbridge and Embury found the believers here, and collected them into societies; nor does it appear that the people solicited Mr. Wesley to take them under his care. Coke and Moor, in their life of Wesley, say, "Mr Webb, a Lieutenant in the army, preached in New York and Philadelphia with great success, and with the assistance of his friends, erected a chapel in New York."—"Induced by the success he met with, and by an earnest desire of saving souls, *he wrote to Mr. Wesley, earnestly importuning him to send Missionaries to that continent.* Accordingly Mr. Wesley nominated Mr. Richard Boardman and Mr. Joseph Pilmoor as Missionaries for America." By the above quotation it was Captain Webb, as he has been usually called, and *not* the American societies, that solicited foreign aid. When Mr. Rankin arrived in this country, he immediately *assumed* the authority to govern the societies as Mr. Wesley might direct. And this *assumption* has been plead as a ground of *right* with which the people are never afterwards to intermeddle!

But it is further asserted, that by submitting to the system introduced by Mr. Rankin, the people forever surrendered their rights as believers in Christ; and that the only one they retained is that of *withdrawing* from under the preachers' government and authority. It is difficult to tell how those who make this silly assertion came by their information. Did the believers when they joined the society stipulate, that, while they surrendered the right of private opinion, the freedom of speech and of the press, and all participation in the formation of such regulations as are necessary to carry the laws of Christ into effect, this one, namely, the right to *withdraw*, was reserved to themselves to be used when they might think proper to exercise it? The truth is, there was no such stipulations entered into in relation to *any* of those rights; they are all *inalienable* and cannot be surrendered. The preachers had no right to demand their surrender, nor could the people alienate them from themselves by tacit or any other consent; much less for future generations.

We will here incorporate the views of an aged Methodist minister, communicated nearly twenty years ago. He remarks; It may be said, that ever since the formation and organization of the Church, things have been as they are at present; and that by a *tacit* agreement at least, the laity have allowed the ministry to make laws for them without their consent. To this, he says; I shall answer for myself in a few words; and the same things will apply, perhaps, to thousands besides. 1st. When I became a member of the Church, my mind was not occupied with any thoughts of Church government. I was very recently converted, and wished to declare my gratitude to my Saviour, as well by making a public profession of his religion by joining some de-

nomination of christians, as with a view to enable me to work out my salvation for the future; and the Methodists, on account of their doctrines and piety, were the people of my choice. Government then was entirely out of the question. 2d. As I began to reflect on the discipline of the Church, there were many things which I did not like, but as I had full confidence in my brethren I submitted; believing that time would disclose the necessity of a change in those exceptionable points. 3d. There was not, until a few years past, any public investigation of those subjects; many may have thought as I thought, and felt as I felt, still there was no medium by which brethren at a distance from one another could communicate their thoughts, nor any vehicle by which a knowledge of the views and feelings of others could be obtained. Many like the prophet, may have individually supposed themselves standing alone, and were, therefore, unwilling to express their opinion, even to a friend, lest they should be thought singular. But now, like the prophet's servant, their eyes being opened, they see there is a host on the same side.

When a man became a member of the Church, there was no public declaration on the one part, nor explicit understanding on the other, that he had no rights in Church matters, nor was to have any; that the traveling ministry were to judge for him; that it appertained to them of right to decide on what would be most suitable to his condition, and prescribe for him accordingly; that they alone were to make laws for him, without his consent, and even contrary to his consent, and that, in fact, all he had to do, was to submit to the ruling powers, as a peaceable son of the Church. O! no, this was neither understood nor avowed. Will any man say, that

the pretensions of the travelling ministry, or the state of the Church, are now what they were twenty or thirty years ago; and that all who joined the Church then, are by contract, engagement, or understanding, under obligation to submit quietly, and without an expression of remonstrance, to such demands?—For as much, then, as there was no such understanding at the time, or such a statement made as a condition of membership—and as I have not since consented, or agreed directly or indirectly, to yield these rights to my travelling brethren, I hold it as a palpable truth, that I retain them still. *Mutual Rights*, vol. 1.

Unquestionably, this aged brother was right. And even if such stipulation had been entered into, in a formal and explicit manner, it could not be binding, because neither party had a right to enter into any such contract.

The entire claim on the part of the Methodist Itinerant Ministers to legislate and administer the government of the Church, without the presence and concurrence of representatives from the people, is an *assumed* right, which never was, nor ever can be proved by Scripture, or any analogy whatever, except it be that found in the papal system. And even in that system, it was not until the twelfth century, that the people were shut out; for a single Pope never sat on St. Peter's Chair at Rome, for 1,160 years, without the elective voice of the people, as may be seen by reference to Mosheim's and Gregory's Church History.

It has been, and is repeatedly asserted, by the opponents of lay-representation, that the great success of Methodism is to be mainly attributed to the peculiarity of the Methodist Episcopal Church government, which

confides to the hands of the Itinerant Ministry, exclusively, the direction of Church affairs, and, therefore, a representation should not be admitted, nor any changes made. This is utterly futile. The unparalleled success of Methodism from the year 1800, up to the present period, is, fairly to be attributed, to the introduction of Camp Meetings, which first began in the State of Tennessee, and then were introduced into Kentucky, the Carolinas, and Georgia; and then into Maryland, New York, &c. These woods meetings furnished the great desideratum, *room, and public attention*. Thousands began to hear Methodist preaching, who, until then, had only heard that a people called Methodists existed in different parts of the United States. The consequence was, that instead of some ten or twenty converted in the course of a year in a vicinity, hundreds were brought to the saving knowledge of the truth, and added to the Church.

In support of our opinion, let us look at the facts of the case. From the commencement of Methodism, up to 1796, a period of thirty years, there were in Church fellowship in the United States only 45,000 white members. From 1790 to 1796 there was a decrease of 565 white, and 1,604 coloured members. Total decrease in six years, 2,169. From 1791 to 1800, a period of nine years, the minutes only shew an increase of 862 white, and 568 coloured members. For ten years next preceding 1800, the Methodists were barely able to hold their own in point of numbers. After 1800, the period of the introduction of Camp Meetings, the membership increased annually by *thousands*. In fact, we have known a single Camp Meeting, especially on the Eas-

tern Shore of Maryland, to report the conversion of many hundreds of persons, in the course of a week.

The average increase of the membership for the subsequent ten years, say, from 1800 to 1810, was about eleven thousand a year.

Thus much for the true cause of the unparalleled success of Methodism. It is not because a lay representation is rejected, and the Churches controlled and governed exclusively by Itinerant Ministers. It is fairly to be attributed, under the Divine influence, to the introduction and continuation of Camp Meetings, where the pure Gospel of Christ is preached to listening thousands.

We will close this chapter by a brief notice of another great error committed by the General Conference of 1792. It was, the continuing to Mr. Asbury all the immense power possessed by him, while acting as Mr. Wesley's Superintendent. Nor was any part of it subtracted even in 1808, when the *delegated* General Conference was authorized, but the whole amount was continued, and guarded by a restrictive article, which forbids the delegated General Conference to trench in the slightest degree on the power and prerogatives of the bishops. To these officers belong the authority to appoint and remove all the presiding elders, without the least interference on the part of the Annual Conferences—to station and change all the preachers in the entire connexion, without any one of them having a right to appeal from his appointment—to preside in all the Conferences, General and Annual—and to oversee and overrule the spiritual and temporal concerns of the whole Church. This immense power gives to the superintendents an irresistible, controlling influence over every department of the Church, legislative, judicial and execu-



tive; and enables them to govern the Church in accordance with their own notions of right and wrong. It may be said, without fear of successful contradiction, that what is called "the episcopacy," concentrates in itself all the power, patronage, and possessions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

---

## CHAPTER V.

PRESIDING ELDER QUESTION.—GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE REFORM QUESTION.—SPECIMENS OF THE VIEWS AND WRITINGS OF REFORMERS.

WE remarked at page 63, that the presiding elder question had greatly agitated the travelling connexion, from the year 1800, until the decease of Mr. Asbury in 1816; and, that after that event, the discussion became more serious, and exciting. At the General Conference, held in Baltimore, 1820, the question assumed so serious an aspect as to induce the belief, that a separation would be the inevitable result. At this conference, the matter was referred to a committee of six, three of whom were chosen by the party in favour of the change, and three from the party opposed to it. The committee came to a compromise, and reported in favour of the bishop nominating three preachers for every vacancy, out of which number the Annual Conference should elect one. The report was adopted by a large majority. Yet, the senior bishop, Mr. McKendree, and the bishop elect, Mr. Soule, declared the plan to be unconstitutional; and the



former threatened to appeal in the last resort to the Annual Conferences, &c. At a late period of the session, when several members of the General Conference were absent, a vote to suspend the action on the resolution was taken, and the measure was suspended till the next General Conference.

These warm contests among the itinerant preachers for a division of power, had again waked up the local preachers and laity to an investigation of their rights to a representation in the legislative department of the Church.\* The local preachers perceived, that while they were clothed with authority to preach the gospel and to administer the ordinances, in common with their itinerant brethren, they were shut out from all pastoral and executive duties, and fully excluded from rendering any assistance in framing those rules and regulations by which they were governed. Petitions had been sent up to the General Conference, from time to time, praying for redress of grievances, but without effect, until 1820, when the conference condescended to listen to the petitions and enacted the rule authorizing "District Conferences."

This regulation, while it fell vastly short of what many of the local preachers desired, secured to them a very important advantage, namely, that of assembling annually in District Conferences, where they might exchange views, and officially communicate to the Church and to the General Conference such suggestions as they

\*Jesse Lee says, in his History of Methodism, that as early as 1794, there was much disquietude in the Church among the local preachers and people, "Some of them contended, that the local preachers ought to have a seat and vote in all our conferences; and others said, there ought to be a delegation of lay members." P. 213.

might, from time to time, deem proper and profitable. Prior to the passage of the rule, the local preachers had no legitimate fraternity, no organized affinities to one another or to the travelling preachers; and remained in an isolated state, dispersed and shut out from all regular connexion with any body of ministers. The rule gave them an organized existence, and certain privileges, but was exceedingly defective, in as much as it did not *specify* any kind of service, which the local preachers, as pastors in the Church of Christ, ought to perform—nor did it provide for any associate duties nor plan of co-operation between the itinerant and local ministry of the Church by which a good understanding and mutual efforts might be secured.

Those defects gave rise to additional discussions, and became the subjects of memorials to the General Conference for certain amendments to the rule. By this time, the people began to look more closely at their condition, and to present their claims to lay representation. Knowing that they constituted the great body of the Church, and, consequently, should have a check upon clerical power by a representation in the rule making department, many of them determined to employ such means as, in their judgment, were calculated to exhibit the defects and ruinous tendencies of the Methodist Episcopal Church government; and, to introduce such salutary changes as would make it equitable and permanent. The people with few exceptions, had been kept in profound ignorance of the nature of the government. It became necessary, therefore, to institute means for the general illumination of the people's minds.

A periodical, entitled "The Wesleyan Repository," edited by Wm. S. Stockton, being started about this time,

opened its columns for the reception of pieces on Church government. This paper, though limited in its circulation, furnished a medium for communication and a field for discussion. Reformers availed themselves of this vehicle, and entered into a free and full examination of all questions relating to Methodism. The work, however, its editor and writers, were soon proscribed by the friends of absolute authority. The editor was viewed as a disturber of the peace—the writers as backsliders—and the work itself as a malevolent engine designed to destroy Methodism in this country. Decided efforts were made to prevent its circulation, and pains were taken to curtail the influence of those who contributed to its columns. One of its writers, in a Review of the work, when it had progressed to the third volume, says: “Hitherto a few solitary writers, unknown to each other, have furnished all the original essays upon the great principles of Church rights and privileges: in which all have one infinite interest; and yet the editor was left with his scanty subscription list to struggle against prejudice and all opposition, on his own responsibility. At one time he was brought so low as to be compelled to advertise that the work must stop; but by the timely aid of a few generous patrons, and the efforts of one man, he was not only enabled to proceed, but to obtain original matter more than sufficient for each succeeding number. In the annals of printing in this country, there is not perhaps an instance of a periodical work, which from so small beginning and under so many discouragements, has risen by its own merits to so great a degree of independence on borrowed matter.—Love for a good cause, for the best of causes, and sympathy for the editor, and these alone, could have overcome the inconve-

niencies under which many a line in the Repository has been written. But those John Baptists in the cause of religious liberty, have lived to see, those come after them, who were by official station preferred before them. They have wrestled till the break of day, and they hail its beams and exult in them."

We will here furnish two or three articles from the above named work, in view of shewing the opinions and sentiments of writers on the side of reform during our early struggle for Church representation.

The two following letters are a part of a series addressed to the friends and patrons of the right of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church to represent themselves in the General Conference of 1824, by the Rev. Nicholas Snethen.

#### LETTER I.

*Friends and Brethren*,—I am induced to address you on the momentous subject of legislative rights, in consequence of a notice I have received, that it has become a question, whether it will be proper to send delegates to the next General Conference with our claims, &c. Such a measure, in my humble judgment, would be premature. But before I proceed to offer my reasons, in order to obviate suspicion of my motives, I will avow my own sentiments. I do believe, that it is the inherent and unalienable right of every Church or body of christians, either personally or by their representatives, to have a voice in the making, forming, and altering the rules and regulations, by which they are to be governed. I will also define the meaning, which I affix to the term Church, in these letters. For the sake of brevity, and from certain relative considerations, I include the local

preachers with the private and official members, and contradistinguish them collectively from the travelling preachers, under the term Church. Now it is well known, that the great and essential principle of Church liberty, representation, has never been recognized either by the Annual or General Conferences, though all our rules and regulations have emanated from them. And moreover, that the very rules and regulations which may not be altered or repealed by the delegates of the Annual Conferences, were made without the knowledge or consent of the Church.

The assumption of right on the part of the travelling preachers, must, I hold, be formally and publicly disavowed by them. Is it not evident, that if the friends and patrons of the legislative rights of the Church, are resolved to maintain them, (and how can they do otherwise,) and the travelling preachers refuse to surrender them, there must be a division? Let no one say, if so, the sooner the better; but rather let the Church give the travelling preachers a reasonable time and a fair opportunity, to make the surrender with as much willingness as possible.

For myself, I must bear my testimony against all compromise or barter in this matter. The right of the Church to representation, must be entire, or not at all. Half rights in legislation, are whole wrongs. All that ought to be asked or that can be granted, is, that the majority may govern. I can never consent to hold my right of suffrage, as a favour or grant. The right of representation, is like personal identity. We cannot consent to part with it, without becoming accessory to our own destruction. Sooner or later, either, directly or indirectly it must come to this crisis. Either we

must publicly admit and declare that the travelling preachers have the right to make rules and regulations for us, or they must publicly disavow the right; or we must lose all confidence in them and consider them as usurpers. When I lose all hope, that the travelling preachers will in due time refuse to legislate for the Church, I shall lose my affections for them also. At present, I am disposed to consider their pertinacity as the effect of ignorance, or want of reflection, or error in judgment, either of which it will require time and judicious management to overcome. But I place the greatest reliance upon time. The subject is only just begun to be fairly discussed among us. Heretofore, some of the best men considered, that the benefits of itinerancy would sanctify all consequences. Is there a preacher who claims or covets the power to legislate for the Church, for its own sake? It is true, and we are sorry to say it, that there are certain travelling preachers who use great swelling words—But this kind of language, though deserving of rebuke, does not seem to me, to amount to proof positive that they are incurably ambitious. I do not mean to say, that there is no ambition in the midst of this monopoly of power; but that it may be concealed from the subjects of it, under the plausible disguise of zeal for itinerancy. At all events, time will soon introduce a new body of men into the travelling connexion, who will have grown up under different circumstances, and with different views of christian rights. Are there not some among the young preachers, who within the three years last past, have reflected more upon the subject of Church rights, than some of the older ones did, in their whole lives? It was, perhaps, commendable in the former state of

things, for those preachers who were in favour of the rights of the Church, to express themselves sparingly and with caution in the presence of the members of the Church. But now, that the subject is fully before the public, may they not communicate their opinions freely, without violating the rules of prudence. Indeed, from the spirit of inquiry which has gone forth, they will be scarcely able to conceal their views without trespassing upon their sincerity as much as their inclination. I take it for granted, that our friends will be at little pains to conceal themselves. The more publicly they are known, the faster their number will increase.

I submit it therefore for consideration, whether it is not at this conjuncture, a dictate of prudence to avoid every measure which may have a tendency to increase the jealousy, or excite the resentment of those, who are hostile to the agitation of questions involving our rights; and to weaken the confidence of our friends in our discretion. But will not the presence of any delegates from us at the time and place of the meeting of the General Conference of 1824, induce its members to take the attitude of resistance, and tend to repress full debate and inquiry? Will it not be proclaimed, that the enemy is at the gates? That the standard of revolt is raised—and that the only security of travelling preachers is in holding the title to Church property by exclusively occupying the seats of the General Conference? In the meantime, the members of the Church who are ignorant of our motives and aims, and have not made themselves acquainted with the merits of the subject of representative legislation, may be alarmed and rallied round the travelling preachers, to prevent a supposed revolution.



My plan, therefore, is, that we continue to encourage our friends to write, and by their writings to disseminate principles, and leave the next General Conference, as free from any cause of fear or restraint as may be, and thus give them a fair opportunity to make a voluntary surrender of a power, the right of which they ought to disclaim. But if they remain inflexible, that we then proceed to organize ourselves into a kind of patriotic societies, for the purpose of obtaining and securing to ourselves, the right of ecclesiastical suffrage, and acquiring a knowledge of our numbers, views and proceedings; and that as soon as we become sufficiently numerous and united, we signify to travelling preachers our free and sovereign will, and let them know, that the time is come for them to yield to necessity, as they would not to justice and reason; we may add, that if they persist, all the blame, and all the evil of dividing themselves from the majority of the Church, must be upon their own heads.

#### LETTER II.

*Friends and Brethren*,—Those travelling preachers who are in favour of the continuation of the present powers and prerogatives of the General Conference, to make rules and regulations for us without our consent, or to secure them, are not backward to aver, that the majority of the Church are in favour of them also. If the question were put to vote it might so turn out; for, as the General Conference would have the regulating of the business, they might do it pretty much in their own way. The question in their hands will hardly be permitted to assume the form of “to be or not to be”—to be free-men or bond-men. Were the vote actually



taken, should it not be in a form somewhat like the following;—1st. Do you believe that a Church or body of faithful men have any legislative rights?—the vote to be taken in the form of ayes and noes; and the noes to be numbered; then let the ayes, or those in the affirmative, give a 2d vote; thus—Are you willing to give up, renounce, and surrender, without reserve, for ever, all your legislative right, title and claim by your representatives, or otherwise to make, form, or alter the rules and regulations by which you are to be governed, as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to the delegates of the Annual Conference, in General Conference assembled? Then let the two columns be added together—that is, those who believe they have no legislative or representative rights, and those who, though they do, are nevertheless willing to give them all up to the General Conference. Now, it is plain that if the majority of the votes of the whole number of members, taken in this way, or some other equally well calculated to prevent deception or error, should be against us, then, upon our own principles, as peaceable christians, we must submit, until, on some future and proper occasion, the vote should be again taken.

I conceive, Brethren, that even in cases where the right and the truth of principle is manifestly on the side of the minority, it is not safe to trust the power to govern the majority, in their hands. Neither truth nor right is omnipotent in this world. The doctrine of irresistible grace, and once in grace always in grace, is not in our creed.

But admitting that the majority of the Church is in favour of all the legislative power being in the travelling preachers, may it not come to pass, that the travel-

ing preachers themselves may become so enlightened as to refuse to legislate for the Church, or any body else, without their representatives? Sacred and profane, ecclesiastical and civil history, furnish examples of men refusing to accept of supreme power, when offered to them by the people, and of others surrendering it, and even their own lives, as a sacrifice to liberty. What a redeeming and glorious day for travelling preachers would it be, if, when solicited by the majority of the Church to make laws for them, or rather to hold the power to make them, they should answer as the olive-tree, and the fig-tree, and the vine, and not as the bramble answered the trees in the parable,—“The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive-tree, reign thou over us; but the olive-tree said unto them, should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said unto the fig-tree, come thou and rule over us; but the fig-tree said unto them, should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, come thou and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, should I leave my wine, which cherisheth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?” This parable is, in its imagery, admirably calculated to cure a propensity to ambition in travelling preachers. The olive-tree, the fig-tree, and the vine, conscious of their valuable qualities, refuse to exchange them for the phantom of power; but the worthless and barren bramble having none but combustible qualities, calls these forth to devour the servile trees, who had renounced their right to an independent government, and had been supplicating

for a master—for not doing an impossible act, how could they stoop, and even beneath this low, mean bush. Have travelling preachers no fatness, nor sweetness, nor spirit grateful to heaven and earth, pleasing to God, and beneficial to man, which power cannot give, nor the loss of it take away? We trust they have, and may still have abundantly more. Let it be our first object to rouse them to emulation. The love of power has not been universal among priests, nor even among monks. The man who led the way in the reformation, was a priest and a monk, and several of his contemporaries and successors were priests. Shall Germany, and France, and Britain, only, furnish champions and martyrs for the rights of Churches against priestly supremacy? Let us hope better things of American Methodist travelling preachers.

As the ensuing General Conference will be the first to meet after our legislative rights have been fairly brought into discussion, I am anxious that the experiment should have a trial, that we may see how they will treat it, as an abstract question of right. Will there be found a mover and seconder to bring forward and sustain the motion? How will it be disposed of? Will the question be debated, &c. &c.? If a division is called for, what number will rise in its favour? Who will have the confidence to vote that the members of the Church have no legislative rights! For these are items on which our future proceedings must be predicated, if they approach to correctness. I trust there is not one among us who is not disposed to judge as favourably as facts and circumstances will warrant of travelling preachers, much less to condemn them all indiscriminately, and without proof, as usurpers of our rights. Moreover, if the General Conference should possibly

adopt severe and rigorous measures, it will be very desirable to let all see that we gave them no pretext; and as for any fears of pains and penalties, I am persuaded that if they ever existed among us they have long since gone by. As conscious of our integrity as of our rights, and resolved by the help of grace, to walk worthy of our calling, no law that can be executed in our Church can have any terrors for us.

We shall probably for some time to come be doomed to hear the old logic, or rather eulogy of itinerant power. The duty and purity of the Church cannot continue without discipline, and discipline cannot be maintained without exclusive power in the travelling preachers, to make and execute rules! Take away or qualify, or limit the power of the travelling preachers, and there can be no government, take away government and there can be no religion!! If it were not for this means, says a zealous member, we should not be better than other people; and if it were not for that, says another, we should lose all our religion; but the zealous itinerant don't lay so much stress upon these minor matters; the inference from his argument is, that neither a Saviour, nor grace, nor sacraments, nor good preaching, nor any thing else can save us from ruin, without itinerant *power*. The fatness of the olive, the unction of the holy one; the sweetness and good fruit of the fig-tree, the precious promises and truths of the gospel; the fruit of the vine, the wine of the kingdom, will be all in vain without *power*! O ye trees, let us rule over you! We have indeed wrong headed men who talk, in effect, at this random rate. Though it is afflicting to hear them, yet we must do all we can to teach them that they are not the whole body; but only members in particular.

NICHOLAS SNETHEN,

The following paper is from the pen of the late Dr. John French, of Norfolk, Virginia; a man of the most amiable dispositions, and possessed of a strong, comprehensive and discriminating mind.

*An essay on the unlimited power of the Itinerant Ministry.*

After a great deal of reluctant feeling, I have written a few lines on the subject of our Church government. I performed the task reluctantly, not because I did not feel sufficient interest in the subject, but because I have an aversion to controversy; and moreover, because much abler writers have embarked in the cause. Upon reflection, I concluded, that every one ought to bear his part, and contribute his mite for the support of a cause, at once so just and important.

Our good, but we think, mistaken brethren of the opposition, cannot deny us the right of thinking, nor of investigating the government of the Church, to which we belong. Had this right never been asserted, what would have been the condition of the world at this time? Italy, Spain and Portugal, where inquiry and investigation respecting ecclesiastical polity are prohibited, are now furnishing a record of this woful theme, written with the blood of thousands. Such might now have been our fate, had not the Lord raised up and qualified men to bring about the reformation. Protestants all agree in considering this great work to have been good; and think the reformers acted a most worthy part. Yet these men were condemned by the authorities which they opposed, just as the course which we are now pursuing is condemned by the enemies of reform. Raising clamours against Reformers, and calling them by opprobrious names, however, is no evidence that they are

wrong, or that they are bad men. The whole affair rests upon the merits of the case. If the doctrines advanced by the reformers, are not founded on truth and righteousness, it becomes the anti-reformers to make it appear by fair arguments and sound reasonings. To arraign the motives and integrity of brethren has nothing to do with the question.

We may be bad men, acting under the influence of bad motives, and yet our doctrines may be true and our cause good. On the contrary, we may be good men, acting under the influence of good motives, and yet our cause may be bad, and our doctrines false. Our motives, and our good or bad dispositions, have nothing to do with the subject. Either we or our opponents are in the wrong; and a righteous decision of the question must depend on the intrinsic merits of the case. Then let us hear no more about "dark designs," "rebellious dispositions," "backslidings," &c. &c. The public ought to be suspicious of any cause, which for its support, substitutes abuse for argument.

That the travelling preachers are in possession of all power and authority in the Church, it is presumed, no person who is at all acquainted with our economy, will pretend for a moment to deny. If, however, this should be called in question by any man, I would ask him, if any one, except travelling preachers, can vote at the election of members for the General Conference, where all the laws of the Church are made. I would ask further, if any except travelling preachers, are at all eligible to the conference, and whether, this election does not take place in secret, confined exclusively to the travelling preachers? Are not the local preachers and lay members, all carefully and uniformly excluded? I ask

again, if it is not, as it regards the Church generally, a secret transaction, and whether the conferences, are not to all intents and purposes, secret conclaves? Who was ever permitted to enter those secret chambers at the time of elections, except the travelling preachers? I ask again, whether the whole membership can appoint or displace a single class leader? And whether the travelling preacher has not the power to do both at his own good pleasure, asking no questions; just as the lord of a manor would appoint his own steward, or as the owner of a plantation would elevate or depose one of his servants. And when the itinerant preacher has at any time exercised his prerogative, and a class leader has been put up, or put down, have the class any right to say a word in the way of disapprobation? And I would ask yet again, if a steward or trustee be wanted, whether the travelling preacher does not name his man? and whether the members can appoint any other person except the one so nominated by the preacher? In like manner, if any member be charged with immoral conduct, whether the travelling preacher has not the power to appoint the committee for the trial of the case? and this too without check or restriction, although it gives an opportunity, if at any time such opportunity might be sought, to pack a jury? Does he not himself sit as a judge of the court on the trial? Has he not the power of summoning persons to the trial, forthwith, without furnishing any specifications of the charges preferred against them? And has any person, when about to be tried, a right to object to those who may be appointed to sit on his case, however certain he may be of their prejudice against him?



Can there be a man in this nation of light and liberty, who thinks like a man, whose mind has not been previously drilled, that does not think such power too absolute to be sustained? Shall Christ's freeman, when his christian character is called in question, have no security for a fair and just trial, except so far as the travelling preacher may be pleased to grant it to him? Shall he have no right to demand justice nor power to obtain it? Tell it not in China, publish it not in the streets of Constantinople! But to return. If in any particular instance, a society should be dissatisfied with the decision of a committee, have they the right of an appeal? Does not the travelling preacher alone possess this right? And if he should think fit to disapprove of an appeal, is not the society without redress? Can any person, except a travelling preacher, have any thing to do with the *book concern*? Does not the discipline recommend, that all Church property be deeded to the use of the travelling preachers, which of course, in all possible cases, is lodged in the hands of men of their own choosing?

Does not the conference dispose of all monies without rendering any account to the members? In a word, are not all the temporal concerns of the Church, directly or indirectly, at the disposal of the travelling preachers? The travelling preachers then must be the fountain from whom all power flows. Without them, there can be no class leaders, no steward, no trustee, no meeting house, no appropriation of money, no trial of members, nor can any member be received into the Church, or taken upon trial. Without them the Church can have no laws; for they elect each other to the legislative councils of the Church. Without them, the government cannot be administered; for they have the executive power exclu-



sively in their own hands. In fact, they have charge of, and do govern and rule the temporal and spiritual concerns of the Church. And all this, heaven and earth moves at their nod. The whole membership, with the local preachers, exhorters, stewards and trustees, to help them, cannot make one class leader, or do any thing else without a travelling preacher. He must point his finger or give his nod, or the wheels of our Zion must stand still.

Are the local preachers and lay members of the Church, so incompetent to self-government, and so entirely unworthy of trust and confidence, that they ought to be thus carefully and entirely proscribed? Why else are they placed at such a distance? Why this studied solicitude to keep them under foot? Why all this sensibility when their degraded situation is complained of? Why all this jealousy and this fear, lest they should have a check upon the power exercised over them?

Are travelling preachers the only wise men living, and will wisdom die with them? Is all the virtue in the Church treasured up in themselves? Do they alone care for the things of Jesus Christ? And have they alone the necessary wisdom to seek after them and secure them? This appears to be the language of our government. The language of the men who hold the reins in their hands. Where is humility in this? It is certainly too much for humble men to say all this of themselves. It would be enough to hear it from the lips of others. Is there no danger to be apprehended from such great and irresponsible power? Is it not known, that a sudden induction into it, generates pride and ambition? And does it not tend to produce a spirit of resistance or debasement in those over whom it is exercised?

What is the difference between a civil and religious community? Are they not both composed of men;—of the same men? And are men entitled to greater liberty and surer protection for their horses, their cattle, their bodies, and their good name in this world, than for their spiritual interest and christian character in the Church of Christ? Is it not considered necessary to the safety of ourselves and our property, that our rulers should be accountable to us? I say to *us*, not to *each other*, as is the case with the rulers of our Church. And will it be thought strange that men should ask for the same security, in things that are acknowledged on all hands to be infinitely of greater importance? As men, our rights and privileges obtain in every relation, compact, association or possible arrangement, which can be made under the sun, and there is but one way to set aside this position, which is to insist on the infallibility of the rulers. If they can do no wrong, there is no necessity for the people to have any guard. And on this ground the idea of rights is exploded.

And it will be said that our travelling preachers are infallible? If not, upon what other ground can we account for the strange doctrine, that our community has no rights? Can it be true that christian men have no rights in the Church to which they belong? That all rights and privileges belong to the travelling preachers alone? That they are men, and that the people and local preachers, are made to bear burdens and be governed? We say that such complaints ought to be silenced.—But they ought to be silenced in righteousness. I repeat the question, is it true, that the local preachers and lay members, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are unworthy of confidence, and ought not to

be trusted with any of the affairs of the Church? Is it true, that the itinerant preacher, though young, untutored, without experience, and perhaps a perfect stranger, having arrived at his charge but yesterday, is the only man on the circuit or station, who is capable of judging who are most fit for class leaders, stewards and trustees, and, in a word, for every thing that is wanting? That without him nothing can be done, and that he can do all things. He names his man, he appoints, removes and judges, &c. &c. Now most assuredly, there must sometimes be some misjudging and wrong doing in these things, or else the Methodist travelling preachers are inspired like the Apostles were. For how can they be supposed to be competent under such circumstances, to judge in all these important matters without inspiration. In addition to a divine right to do every thing, they must have divine inspiration also, to teach them how every thing ought to be done! It may be said, that the preachers generally inquire of the brethren concerning these things. This we know he may do if he pleases. But suppose he chose to take his own way, asking no questions, has he not the power to do so? And has the Church any redress? It may be asked if our travelling preachers are not good men, who, of course, will endeavour to govern well? The question should rather be, has not Christ's freeman a just and equitable claim to some better security than this? Ought he to be left exposed to the mercy of any man? Some of the members and local preachers, are old and grey headed fathers in Israel, who have borne the heat and burden of the day; and have been worn down by preaching the everlasting gospel without charge, giving support to others. Is it seemly for such to be left exposed to the

caprice, inexperience, and possibly the jealousy of a youth, who was not born when they enlisted in the holy war, or began to sound the trumpet on the walls of Zion. The heart of man must sicken at the thought, unless previous training, prepossession, prejudice, or something else, has destroyed the sensibility and reasoning powers of his soul.

It is freely acknowledged, and I make the acknowledgment with emotions of joy, that our travelling preachers have been, and are now good men, and such as we judge incapable of doing known wrong. But what has this to do with the subject?

The question is not, whether in general they are good men, but whether it is not possible that some might not be so good as they ought to be, and whether many of them be not wanting in experience and discretion, not to say information? Whether so much irresponsible power in the hands of any man, is not calculated to injure both himself and others, and whether Christ's freemen are not entitled to better grounds of defence? I say irresponsible power, because our travelling preachers are not responsible to the people over whom they exercise their authority. It may be said, that their character is examined at every Annual Conference. Is not the examination also performed in secret; no person being allowed to be present except the travelling preachers.

Is it supposed that the lay members and local preachers, are enemies to righteousness? or what is the supposition, that it should be thought necessary, in order to the building up of the Redeemer's Kingdom, that they should be kept in ignorance of the characters of their ministers, and the transactions of the Church of which they are members? What must be the opinion which

the thinking part of mankind will form of the members of our Church, when they see them so carefully shut out of doors?

Surely, say they, these are very ignorant or very corrupt men, or something derogatory to a good character must attach to them; for they are not permitted to know any thing more about their own ministers, nor the transactions of their own Church than we are who do not belong to it. Astonishing that men should suffer themselves to be kept in such a degraded condition!

It may be said, that any member of the Church can bring charges against a travelling preacher. But where is this charge to be laid? Before the conference of travelling preachers, and neither the Church nor any of the members, are permitted to know all the proceedings, except a travelling preacher. The charge may be made or sent in, but the accuser will be as carefully sent out. He will not be permitted to see the end of the affair; but the preacher accused, remains in court. And who does not know the fearful odds, when one of the parties is in the court, and the other out?

We have heard of one way by which charges against travelling preachers, have been disposed of,—upon the authority of two members of an Annual Conference, I will state, that a charge against the presiding elder and one of the circuit preachers, signed by thirty members, was sent to conference, but the conference refused to open and read the paper. How can men be said to be responsible to the people, when not one of them have any thing to do with making laws for the government, nor even permitted to hear an examination or investigation of character, or be present at the trial of any charge which they may bring; nor permitted of themselves,

and for themselves, to know and inquire, or examine or judge.

Is not such a state of things calculated to have a dangerous influence over the secret springs of the mind? When the travelling preachers are examining in secret, charges brought against themselves, by the private members or local preachers, might they not be induced to think and say, these are proud, ungovernable, or backsliden men, and of course be tempted to dispose of the whole matter in their own way. As the travelling preachers have their cases in their own hands, is there not a temptation to say; take care, if you are too strict with me, it may be your turn next. Besides, being of the same fraternity, is there no danger that feelings of partiality may arise? These things might be carried to an extent sufficient to prevent justice, even among good men. For men may be influenced by a thousand things of which they are not conscious. The fault lies not so much in the men, as in the circumstances in which they are placed. It is not possible to occupy such ground long without injury. Of this, all Church history and the well known laws of human nature are in proof.

JOHN FRENCH.

*Norfolk, Va.*

The subjoined remarks on the necessity and propriety of a lay delegation accompanied the outlines of a plan, as the deliberate opinion of the author, Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, published in the third volume of the Wesleyan Repository, 1823.

“It does appear, that all parties ought to meet on some such plan; and, it is probable that the local preachers, and the laity, will be reconciled and satisfied with the above proposed one. It is to be hoped that the bishops

and the travelling ministry will meet them on the conciliatory ground, and, at the next General Conference, provide for its going into operation; and do such other things as will consolidate and perpetuate the union, peace, and prosperity of the Church. The writer of this article is strongly persuaded, that every friend of the itinerant ministry and system for promulgating the gospel, ought to patronise the question of a lay delegation, as being calculated to promote, and uphold, and perpetuate the itinerancy, better and longer than it can be by rejecting or refusing to admit a lay delegation. What can the itinerancy do, if the laity, and the local ministry, refuse to support and uphold it? And what can be expected from the laity, and local brethren, if their rights and reasonable privileges are withheld from them? Can it be expected that they will continue long to support those who oppress, or deprive them of their rights, in a voice, or representation, in making laws, rules, and regulations, by which they are to be governed? If the itinerant ministry expect or wish the laity to support and have confidence in them, they must manifest their confidence in, and friendship to the laity. There must be a reciprocity of faith and confidence; otherwise, jealousies will arise, and grow, and the cause be betrayed. Most assuredly, the local ministry and the laity are firm friends to the itinerancy, from which they have derived such benefits; and nothing will, probably, alienate their affections from it, provided they can have redress of grievances, and enjoy their rights and privileges. But, if they be oppressed, and wronged, and deprived of their indefeasible rights, which they claim and demand, what can be expected from them but alienation from the interest and support of those who do



them wrong? Then what will be the condition and end of the itinerancy? O, brethren! let us all cultivate mutual confidence and good will toward each other! Let us pursue and inculcate conciliatory dispositions and measures! Let us not be too tenacious, nor pertinacious, with respect to any former incorrect opinions, customs or usages! But let us all covenant and agree, to be open to conviction, yielding, and condescending toward each other; and without suspicion, jealousy, or fear, let us do that which is reasonable and right in the fitness and nature of things. The laity and local brethren are awake to their rights and privileges; they cannot be, by any opiates, lulled to sleep again; nor, by any weapons, be driven from the ground of their claim and demand, as an inalienable right. The sooner it be yielded the better; for, be ye well assured, that a lay delegation must ultimately be adopted, or the cause of itinerancy, and union and peace, will be greatly endangered, if not ruined and destroyed. United we stand, divided we fall."

A METHODIST.

We close this chapter with a remark or two on the last paper cited, signed "a Methodist." The writer has been a Methodist and a Methodist itinerant preacher from 1784, up to the present time, 1843, which is fifty-nine years. During the whole of that time, he has had as fair an opportunity to study Methodists and Methodism as any other man in the community; and, perhaps, there have been but few, if any, of the preachers possessed of a more liberal and discriminating mind. The judgment of such a man is worthy of all confidence, and ought to have had due weight on the minds and conduct of the itinerant ministry to whom his remarks were ad-



dressed. The last two sentences are strikingly correct, and present themselves to the mind with a conviction not to be resisted, except in cases where purblind prejudice is determined to resist the light to the last extremity. Our venerable brother says. "The laity and local brethren are awake to their rights and privileges; they cannot be by any opiates, lulled to sleep again; nor by any weapons, be driven from the ground of their claim and demand, *as an inalienable right*. The sooner it be yielded the better; for be ye well assured, that a lay delegation must ultimately be adopted, or the cause of itinerancy, and union, and peace, will be greatly endangered, if not ruined and destroyed."

"The laity and local brethren are awake to their rights and privileges." That this statement was not a fancy but a fact, is fully sustained by the interest taken in this question by Methodists in several States of the Union. The delegates elected to the Reformers' Convention of 1827, amounted to one hundred ministers and members of the Methodist E. Church, from the States of Ohio, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Most of these were aged men of the best standing in their respective districts of country. The decided and uncompromising advocates of lay representation. This circumstance alone, sufficiently prove, that our writer was not deceived when he made the declaration. That the laity and local brethren were awake to their rights and privileges.

"They cannot be, by any opiates, lulled to sleep again; nor by any weapons, be driven from the ground of their claim and demand, *as an inalienable right*." How fully was this prediction verified, when the Metho-

dist authorities attempted to coerce reformers by pains and penalties. The persecutions and expulsions instead of intimidating increased the courage and added to the number of reformers, and roused up even the luke-warm to action. These persecutions instead of silencing the question on lay delegation, only served to disgrace the itinerant ministry of the Methodist E. Church, and to hasten the formation of a new Church based on better principles.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1824.—CIRCULAR OF THE CONFERENCE.—REVIEW OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE CIRCULAR.

THE General Conference of 1824 held its session in the City of Baltimore, commencing on May 1st. This conference was contemplated with the deepest solicitude, as forming an era, in the highest degree interesting to the Methodist community. The bishops, the presiding elders, the itinerant and local preachers, and the people, all felt a becoming interest in its acts and decisions. Great pains, however, were taken by anti-reformers, to exclude from that conference the friends of reform. In some of the Annual Conferences every reformer was left out, and the whole delegation made up of the decided enemies of representation and friends to exclusive clerical authority. Take the Baltimore Annual Conference as a specimen. The delegates chosen

from this conference were, Joshua Soule, Nelson Reed, Joshua Wells, Stephen G. Röszel, Joseph Frey, Christopher Frey, Daniel Hitt, Henry Smith, James McCann, A. Hemphill, Richard Tidings, Robert Burch, I. Thomas and John Bear. All admirers and supporters of episcopal prerogative, and opponents of representation; and, with few exceptions, men of very inferior talents. While the best talents of the conference was left out, because they were tainted with the principles of reform. By an extract of a letter from a member of the General Conference, to a friend, the species of management resorted to for the exclusion of all the reformers, and the election of the above named men could be exhibited, but as this may be found by reference to the first volume of Mutual Rights, page 101, we leave the reader to consult it at his leisure.

Many memorials were presented to the conference praying for a reform in the Church government, and some for a continuation of the government in its present form. These were referred, after much opposition, to a committee of twelve. Nathan Bangs, Eleazer Wells, Benjamin G. Paddock, G. R. Jones, S. A. Morris, William McMahan, William Beauchamp, William Capers, Hezekiah G. Leigh, Joseph Frey, Charles Pittman, and Alexander Sale. The memorials and petitions from the local preachers and the membership were, in general, read in the conference before they were referred to the committee; and those to which exceptions were taken, were read so far as to ascertain their drift, and then referred. After some days the committee reported and the General Conference finally decided on an answer to the petitions in the following Circular.

*Circular of the General Conference.*

*Beloved Brethren*,—Several memorials have been brought up to the General Conference, proposing to change the present order of our Church Government. By one or more of these, it is proposed, “to admit into the Annual Conferences, a lay delegate from each Circuit and Station; and into the General Conference, an equal delegation of Ministers and Lay members;” or, “to admit a representation of local preachers and lay members into the General Conference; to be so apportioned with the itinerant ministry as to secure an equilibrium of influence in that body;” or, “that the General Conference call a Convention, to consist of representatives from each Annual Conference, and an equal number of representatives chosen by the members of each Circuit or Station, to form a Constitution which shall be binding upon each member of our Church;” or, “that a representation of the local preachers and the membership be introduced into the General Conference,” either by electing delegates separately, or that the membership be represented by the local ministry, they being elected by the united suffrage of the local preachers and lay members.

To these memorials, as well as to others praying the continuance of our government in its present form, we have given an attentive hearing in full Conference, and after much reflection, we reply;—

We are glad to be assured that there exists but one opinion among all our brethren, respecting the importance of our itinerant ministry; and that they who desire a change, whether of the form of the General Conference alone, or of the Annual Conferences also, are moved to

solicit it, rather by their zeal to support the itinerancy, than from want of attachment to it. They would relieve the preachers of the delicacy of fixing the amount of their own salaries, and in this matter they would act more independently, so they would also provide more liberally.

We respectfully acknowledge the candour of brethren, who, although they intimate that it is unseemly for the preachers to determine their own salaries, yet do not pretend that their allowance is excessive, nor that they claim a right to demand it. It is true that the deficiency of quarterage is so general, in such large proportions, that the Conference collections, and the dividends from the Book Concern and Chartered fund have never been sufficient to supply it; and indeed, the Conference stewards usually settle with the preachers, at a discount of from thirty to sixty per cent.

But we presume that these facts have been generally known; so that whatever injury may be sustained from the scantiness of our support, is attributable not to the improvidence of the rule which limits the amount, but to some other cause; and whatever that cause may be, we at least have no information that the people refuse to contribute, because they are not represented. Indeed it would grieve us to know this; for even though they should refuse to acknowledge us as their representatives in the General Conference, they cannot do less for the love of Christ, than they would oblige themselves to do out of love of authority.

We rejoice to know that the proposed change is not contemplated as a remedy for evils which now exist in some infraction of the rights and privileges of the people, as defined to them by the form of discipline; but

that it is offered, either in anticipation of the possible existence of such evils, or else, on a supposition of abstract rights, which in the opinion of some, should form the basis of our government.

The rights and privileges of our brethren, as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we hold most sacred. We are unconscious of having infringed them in any instance: nor would we do so. The limitations and restrictions which describe the extent of our authority in General Conference, and beyond which we have never acted, vindicate our sincerity in this assertion. By those "restrictions," it is put out of the power of the General Conference "to revoke, alter or change our articles of religion; or to revoke or change the general rules" or "to do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society or by a committee, and of an appeal." The general rules, and the articles of religion, form to every member of our Church *distinctively*, a Constitution, by which, as Methodists and as Christians, ye do well to be governed; and we, assembled together to make rules and regulations for the Church, most cheerfully acknowledge that the restrictions above mentioned, are as solemnly binding upon us, as the general rules are both upon us and you individually.

These restrictions are to you the guarantee of your "rights and privileges;" and while we shall be governed by these as such, we will also regard them as the pledge of your confidence in us.

But if by "rights and privileges" it is intended to signify something foreign from the institutions of the Church, as we received them from our fathers, pardon us if we know no such rights, if we do not comprehend such privileges. With our brethren every where, we

rejoice that the institutions of our happy country, are admirably calculated to secure the best ends of civil government. With their rights as citizens of these United States, the Church disclaims all interference; but, that it should be inferred from these, what are your rights as Methodists, seems to us no less surprising, than if your Methodism should be made the criterion of your rights as citizens.

We believe the proposed change to be inexpedient;

1. Because it would create a distinction of interests between the itinerancy and the membership of the Church.

2. Because it presupposes that, either the authority of the General Conference "to make rules and regulations," for the Church, or the manner in which this authority has been exercised, is displeasing to the Church; the reverse of which we believe to be true.

3. Because it would involve a tedious procedure, inconvenient in itself, and calculated to agitate the Church to her injury.

4. Because it would give to those districts which are conveniently situated, and could therefore secure the attendance of their delegates, an undue influence in the government of the Church.

With respect to lesser matters, mentioned in the memorials, we respectfully refer you to the revised copy of the Discipline forthwith to be published.

Signed by order of General Conference.

WM. McKENDREE,

ENOCH GEORGE,

*Baltimore, May 25, 1824.*

ROB'T R. ROBERTS.

The above circular of the General Conference was subsequently reviewed by the Rev. James Smith of the



Baltimore Annual Conference, and published in the first volume of the Mutual Rights, as follows.

*Review of the Circular of the General Conference  
of 1824.*

As a preliminary consideration, we would take leave to remark, that the "Circular" was not passed by the General Conference until the last day of its session, when most of the representatives of the New York, Genessee, New England, and a number of those from Philadelphia, had left Baltimore, and were on their way home. It was carried through the house with little or no opposition, as it was done in the afternoon of the day on which the "Conciliatory Resolutions" were virtually suspended for four years longer: with all the attendant advantages taken of the minority on account of the absence of so many of their coadjutors in the same common cause. One or two other reasons operated to prevent argumentative opposition to the passage of this "Circular," which, for the honour of the General Conference, we are not a little anxious to place in its true light.

First, it was desired on all hands, we believe, that the session should be closed on that day; and, secondly, because opposition from the quarter whence it was to be expected to come, would on any subject involving a party question, have been under existing circumstances utterly unavailing.

After having stated some of the objects of the memorialists, the authors and friends of the "Circular" have, we would fain hope, forever put to rest all the popular allegations heretofore urged against the Methodist reformers, on the plea that their design is to destroy epis-



copacy and itinerancy. For they say, "*we* are glad to be assured that there exists but one opinion among all our brethren, respecting the importance of our itinerant ministry, and that those who have solicited a change have been induced to do it, rather by their zeal to support itinerancy, than for want of attachment to it." We hope this concession will not be forgotten, nor for a moment lost sight of, at least until proof positive be furnished to demonstrate the hostility of reformers, whether among the laity, or the ministry, to the interests of itinerancy.

In this and the following paragraph, the "Circular" brings into view one of the pleas which the reformers have urged in favour of a more liberal and equitable representation in the General Conference, and gives its own views of that plea. We refer to the plea involving financial resources and arrangements. The deficiency of these resources is fully acknowledged, clearly set forth, and presumed to be known. The authors of the "Circular" justly presume that the deficiency is not owing to the rule which limits the salaries, but to some other cause; and, whatever that cause may be, they profess to have no information that the people refuse to contribute, because they are not represented. They declare it would grieve them to learn this; for even though the laity should refuse to acknowledge the members of the General Conference, as their representatives, that, "they cannot do less for the love of Christ, than they would oblige themselves to do out of the love of authority." In this statement, we think, we discern several errors. Two of which we now propose particularly to notice. First, with respect to the nature of man practically considered. Secondly, with respect to

the love of Christ, contemplated as an incitement on the Methodist laity, under the existing regulations of our Church polity, to contribute to the comfortable support of the ministry.

First, with respect to the nature of man. It is evident to every intelligent observer, that from the nature of the habits and pursuits of the itinerant ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, most of them from a very early period in life, abstracted as they are from the practical theatre of pecuniary concerns, in the prosecution of the objects of their professional avocations, are but poorly qualified for financial disquisitions and arrangements. Indeed, this fact has become notorious to almost all classes of society acquainted with their character. Besides, a well chosen representation from the laity would not only be much more competent to enter efficiently into this subject, by means of the advantages which from their habits they would enjoy over the ministry, but also on account of their relation to the laity generally, as their own proper representatives delegated to act for them: not to mention the greater acquisition of local information which they would necessarily bring along with them. Nor should it be forgotten that a feeling of responsibility would be awakened, which the present order of things never can efficiently call forth.

Secondly, with respect to "the love of Christ" and the "love for authority." The authors of the "Circular" seem to take it for granted, that the love for authority is that which alone induces the laity to wish to be represented in the General Conference. But suppose this view were reversed, and with equal charity and liberality it were assumed that it was the love for authority

alone which induced the ministry at first to monopolise, and now induces them to contend for all legislative power in themselves, and what would be thought of the meekness and liberality of the arguists? Why did not the authors of the "Circular" suppose that it was the love of Christ and the best interests of the Church, which induced the memorialists to ask to be represented in the General Conference; especially, as they were virtually told so, over and over again. If they had indulged liberality enough to have supposed that these brethren had made honest declaration of their sentiments, they might then have perceived it possible, that the love of Christ led to the request for authority, and not have been induced so liberally to have placed the two in such direct contrast to each other. Again, they might have been thus enabled to see, possibly, that the love of Christ might not induce men to support so cordially, an order of things which they believe not best calculated to support the interest of his Church, as they would an order which they conceived would much more effectually subserve that object.

In the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the "Circular," the following propositions are assumed, viz.—

1. That the proposed change in our Church government is not contemplated as a remedy for evils which now exist, in an infraction of the rights and privileges of the people, as defined to them by the form of discipline; but is urged either in anticipation of the possible existence of such evils, or else on a supposition of abstract rights.

2. That "if by rights and privileges," any thing be meant foreign from the institutions of the Church, as we received them from our fathers, the authors of the "Cir-

cular" profess not to know such rights, nor to understand such privileges.

3. That the General Rules and the Articles of Religion, form to every member of our Church, *distinctively*, a constitution, by which, as Methodists and christians, they would do well to be governed.

We propose to examine each of these propositions in turn.

1. We freely admit that the plea for a change in the form of our Church polity, is not rested chiefly, if at all, upon the ground of the infraction of rights, *as marked out by the present book of discipline*; though perhaps, cases are not wanting in which abuses even of that sort have taken place, which would not have been likely to have happened, if the genius of the Church polity had been of a more liberal and equitable a character. But the plea of those favourable to a change is predicated upon the ground that the division of ecclesiastical rights by the Methodist Church government, is not equitable and fair, nor such as the advocates of reform conceive would most effectually subserve the best interests of the Church. And hence it will be perceived, that their plea is not wholly predicated upon what the authors of the "Circular" call abstract rights. We freely concede that the good of the whole community, should be the object at which all legislation, whether civil or ecclesiastical should aim. But at the same time we conceive it is not competent to the few to judge and act in such matters for the many, *except they be delegated with authority by the many to act for them*. Can the General Conference shew that they have such power delegated to them? And if they cannot, how came they to exercise that power.

2. It is alleged by the authors of the "Circular," that if any thing be meant by our "rights and privileges" foreign from the institutions of the Church, as we received them from our fathers, they know not such rights, nor comprehend such privileges. The discipline, then, appears to be the only ground of right which these brethren knew. We think we can trace christian rights to a more primitive ground. Our ground of primitive rights (in general) is the law of nature; incorporated, illustrated, and enforced by the sacred scriptures. Upon principles of natural law, the rights of all men appear to be equal. The foundation of this law is the Will of God, set forth in the nature and fitness of things, together with positive revelation; and reason, guided by the laws of sound criticism, is its expositor. Wherein revelation has not decided, reason is our best guide; wherein revelation has clearly decided, though reason might before, or otherwise have guessed differently, her duty is to bow in submissive confidence. But when men enter into compact, civil or ecclesiastical, reason does not require the vastly larger portion of the community to yield up all legislative rights, but allows the retention of them to be exercised through representatives or otherwise. But if revelation in any case should decide differently, reason should bow acquiescence, since she can view the general subject but partially. Besides, the great Legislator may have had reasons to suspend or waive some precepts of natural law, for what reason can certainly see to the contrary. But as the Christian revelation appears to foster and sustain the judgment of reason on this subject, it would not, perhaps, be too much to say, that their lights together hold the united authority of paramount law. Why is one Church gov-

ernment better than another? Because it is more scriptural, more rational, and therefore, other circumstances being equal, likely to be of more useful effect. This is the only ground upon which any individuals, in any age or country, could fitly call upon any Church to reform its government. Any plea, therefore, set up in opposition to this ground of right, on the score of tacit consent, or any other sort of consent, given in ignorance, or otherwise, (but in error it must have been given, if it be in opposition to scripture) and reason is of no more weight than the chaff before the wind, when set up in opposition to the united lights of scripture and reason, which God has vouchsafed to his creatures. We suppose Luther and his coadjutors had not merely tacitly consented to, and practised under creeds or articles of ecclesiastical compact, but some, if not all of them, had actually and formally subscribed them. Were they therefore incorrect in following their increasing light, and upon the ground of primitive and paramount right, becoming brilliant instruments in achieving the Reformation? If the principle that compact forms the only ground of ecclesiastical and christian right to call upon the Church in which one holds membership, to reform, were in all cases correct, and tacit consent before given, or even positive co-operation entered into, annihilates all christian rights on this score, and ought forever to stop the mouths of christians, then surely Luther and his coadjutors should have been silent. Then where had been the Reformation? So far as the light of history reflects back upon it, and where had we been? It will not relieve the subject to say, that that was a more aggravated case: for, if the principle laid down by the authors of the "Circular" be correct, it is universally so. And if

it be not true, then men have a right to judge for themselves, as to the circumstances of any given case, whether they require reform or not, and also to demand reformation in a christian like way. And therefore, if the authors of the "Circular" "know no such rights," it appears to be time they had looked more closely into this question. "*The institutions of our Church as we received them from our fathers,*" is a trite and very convenient topic. It has been the plea of error in other Churches also. But those who derive their principles from reason and revelation, are not usually in so great need of it. Beside, in the case at issue, even that plea, when urged as a ground of right, is doubtless very flimsy, for the ecclesiastical polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church has been (in general) a creature of change from the beginning. See the account which Mr. Wesley gives of the origin of his power. See also every history of Methodism ever published to the world.

3. It is urged by the authors of the "Circular," that the General Rules and the Articles of Religion form to every member of our Church *distinctively*, a constitution, by which, as Methodists, and christians, they would do well to be governed. A fine stroke indeed! Who ever objected to the Articles of Religion and the General Rules! But what is meant by their forming "to every member of the Church, *distinctively*, a constitution?" Do the authors mean that these rules, and articles ought to be to every member, *distinctively*, a constitution, because they are scriptural in their sentiment? or also, because they stand guarded by the instrument called the Constitution, or restrictive articles, from the legislative infringement of the delegated General Conference? If the latter idea was intended to be included, why did



they not also all say openly, what they have virtually said, namely, that all the other articles of this said instrument also form, to each member of the Church, distinctively, a constitution, or a part of the constitution by which they would do well to be governed. But had they said so; (which by the way is obviously their doctrine,) it might have been asked them, *How* these things came to be, to the members, distinctively, a constitution: The answer, no doubt, would have been, because they tacitly consented to them as such. But of what force is tacit consent, given in ignorance or error? It is silently living under rules and co-operating to carry them into effect, without avowed opposition, or joining the Church when they are known to be in operation. But does this sort of consent foreclose their ever calling for a change in the government, by a recurrence to first principles? We should think not, for the reasons given in our second proposition.

It is stated by the authors of the "Circular," that it is put out of the power of the General Conference, "to revoke, alter, or change our articles of religion;" or, "to revoke or change the general rules;" or, "to do away the privilege of our members of trial before the society, or by a committee, and of an appeal." But it should not be forgotten, when we are appreciating the security which these restrictive articles afford to the rights of the laity, that that very instrument makes provision for its own change, and places the legal means of effecting it wholly at the disposal of the itinerant preachers. It will not be denied, that whenever all the Annual Conferences shall recommend a change in it to the delegates of the ensuing General Conference, and two-thirds of the delegates in the General Conference shall determine

to alter it, they have, by the provision of the instrument itself, the power so to do. Who has in guardianship, so far as men are concerned, all those securities maintained by the restrictive articles? Why, the itinerant ministry. How imposing is the "Circular," but how illusory the boasted ground of constitutional obligation upon the laity when fairly considered! when fairly exposed!

Again, speaking of the argument drawn in favour of a more liberal form of Church government from the genius of our civil institutions, the authors of the "Circular" say, "That you should infer from these (meaning the civil institutions of the United States) what are your rights as Methodists, seem to us no less surprising, than if your Methodism should be made the criterion of your rights as citizens." Now, we fancy the form of our civil government was never offered by any one as an exact pattern for any proposed plan of Church polity. The argument is, that as the one is liberal and equitable in its genius and character, and of course will have its influence on the systems of education and habits of thinking and feeling of the people, more or less, in defiance of *our efforts* to the contrary, so should the other be made so, as far as the similarity of the nature of the subjects, and circumstances, and general utility would admit. And it is supposed that these will admit of, and do even call for a more equitable representation in the legislative body of the Church than now exists; and consequently, that it should be introduced.

The learned Bishop Stillingfleet observes in his *Irenicum*, that "God by his own laws, has given men power and liberty to determine the particular form of Church government among them. Hence it may appear, that though one form of government be agreeable to the

Word, it doth not follow that another is not; or, because one is lawful, another is unlawful. One form may be more agreeable to some parts, places, people, and times, than others are. In which case, that form of government is to be settled which is most agreeable to the present state of a place, and is most advantageously conducive to the promoting the ends of Church government in that place or nation."

Again, the Bishop says, "the reason of Church government is immutable in all times and places, which is the preservation of the peace and unity of the Church; but the particular form of that government, the laws of God have left to the prudence of particular Churches to determine; so, the same reason of Church government may call for an equality in the persons acting as governors of the Church in one place, which may call for superiority and subordination in another."

Thus speaks Bishop Stillingfleet: apply the principles laid down by him to the controversy between the authors of the "Circular," and their memorialists, in reference to American character and institutions, and the fallacy of their wit in attempting to reverse the plea, will obviously appear.

The authors of the "Circular" profess to believe the proposed change to be *inexpedient*:—

"1. Because it would create a distinction of interests between the itinerancy and the membership." And, therefore, it seems, the membership must be kept without any representatives at all (chosen by themselves) in the body which makes the laws by which they are to be governed. Comment on this, might perhaps, justly be deemed needless.

"2. Because it supposes that the authority of the General Conference to make rules and regulations for the Church, or the manner in which this authority has been exercised, is displeasing to the Church; the reverse of which we believe to be true." It remains then, it appears, for the laity themselves (generally) to present this question of fact, in a less dubious light, if they wish the proposed change to take place.

"3. Because it would involve a tedious procedure, inconvenient in itself, and calculated to agitate the Church to her injury." And since she cannot be trusted to choose lay representatives for herself, lest she should be agitated to her injury, therefore let the few continue to legislate for the many, although not chosen as representatives by the many, is the inference; unless they meant this sentiment to bear with reference to the present *time only*. And if they meant that, why did they not so limit and qualify the sentiment?

"4. Because it would give to those districts which are conveniently situated, and could therefore secure the attendance of their delegates, an undue influence in the government of the Church." But why could not the lay representatives from a distance attend *as well* as those of the ministry, provided the present number of the delegates from the ministry were reduced one-half, and their place supplied by laymen? The money which pays the expenses of the ministry, might pay the expenses of lay delegates. And if the laity meet the expenses of the ministry in part gratuitously at present, if the government were so settled, think they then would not also support their own delegates? What though it should be *inconvenient* for some laymen to serve as delegates, would *none make it convenient* to serve the Church

in the capacity of representatives? And might not this be ascertained before the election? And let it be recollected that the inconveniences of attending the General Conferences will, as things now are, occur only once in four years.

Before we close these remarks, we would just observe that the Scriptures appear to secure to the ministry, the pastoral charge in watching over the Church *for its good*, as those who are to give account for the faithful discharge of their duties—to faithfully preach the Word, and administer the ordinances—and those principles of Scripture discipline laid down for dealing with members; but as to the form of the polity according to which the minutæ of rights are to be settled agreeably to existing usages, or rules, as well as the origination of these rules or usages, which is a subject of ecclesiastical legislation, we see not that they have any prerogatives above what belong also to the laity; this being a subject of human policy, using the best means for the best ends; and therefore, reason, moving with a strict regard to scriptural principles, and the fitness of things, would seem to require that the laity should have their equitable share, so far as circumstances will admit, in the legislative councils and decisions of all properly regulated Churches.

HONESTUS.

The attitude taken by the General Conference induced the advocates of representation to fear, that the itinerant ministers would never yield to the Church any portion of their rights, unless a large majority of the people should demand the surrender. They were fully convinced that a more extensive and efficient course of measures would be necessary. And that immediate steps

should be taken to secure the co-operation of reformers throughout the United States, in the preparation of memorials which should speak the same language, and hold the same object strongly in view, namely, REPRESENTATION in the rule-making department.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

MEETING OF REFORMERS IN BALTIMORE AFTER THE RISE OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1824.—FORMATION OF THE FIRST UNION SOCIETY.—PUBLICATION OF THE MUTUAL RIGHTS.—EXPULSIONS IN TENNESSEE AND IN NORTH CAROLINA.

AFTER the rise of the General Conference, a meeting of reformers was convened in Baltimore, May 21st, 1824, for the purpose of devising and adopting such measures as they might deem necessary in the exigencies of the case, and calculated to effect an improvement in the government of the Church. Several distinguished travelling ministers were present, and also local ministers and laymen from different parts of the United States. Dr. S. K. Jennings was called to the chair, and Dr. Francis Waters was appointed secretary. The following extracts from the minutes of proceedings will shew the results of their deliberations and determinations.

*Resolved* 1. To institute a periodical publication to be entitled the Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church; to be conducted by a committee of ministers and laymen.

*Resolved 2.* To raise societies in all parts of the United States, whose duty it shall be to disseminate the principles of a well balanced Church government, and to correspond with each other.

*Resolved 3.* To appoint a committee out of our own body to draft a circular addressed to the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to forward the same, forthwith, to all parts of the United States.

The following brethren were then appointed to perform this service. Dr. S. K. Jennings, Baltimore; Dr. John French, Norfolk, Virginia; W. Smith, New York; Gideon Davis, Georgetown, D. C.; John Wesley Bordley, and Philemon Hopper, Eastern Shore, Maryland. After which the following Preamble and Constitution were unanimously adopted.

### CONSTITUTION

*Of the Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church  
in the City of Baltimore.*

WHEREAS, in all equitable ecclesiastical governments it is an acknowledged principle, that each member of the community should be secured in his rights as a Christian believer, one of which is a participation in the enactment of such rules and regulations as are necessary to preserve the purity, peace, and prosperity of the body, either personally or by his representative; and, whereas, the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church is so organized as to give to the travelling preachers the sole power "to make rules and regulations for our Church," to the entire exclusion of the local preachers, and the whole body of the people; and whereas, a large number of the itinerant and local preachers, and of the laity, desire to have the government of our Church so altered, as to extend



representation to the excluded ministers and to the lay members, it is, therefore, deemed proper, in order to ascertain the number of persons in the Methodist Church who are friendly to such alteration, to raise societies in all parts of these United States, to correspond with each other on such subjects as they may believe calculated to improve our Church polity.

Therefore, *Resolved*, that we, the undersigned, members of the Methodist Church in the City of Baltimore, do form ourselves into a society for the above named purposes, and do agree to be governed by the following Constitution.

ARTICLE 1. The Society shall be denominated, The Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Baltimore.

ART. 2. The Officers of this Society shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Corresponding Committee of three members, and an Editorial Committee of four Ministers and four Laymen, all of whom shall be elected annually by ballot.

ART. 3. The President, or in his absence, one of the Vice-Presidents, or in the absence of all three, a President pro-tempore shall preside at every meeting of the Society,—and every meeting shall be opened and closed with prayer.

ART. 4. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer, to receive and hold the funds of the Society, subject to its directions, and to render annually a statement of receipts and disbursements, and faithfully to deliver over to his successor in office, all the funds, books, papers and effects of this Society in his possession.

ART. 5. It shall be the duty of the Secretary, to keep a record of the proceedings of the Society, and perform such other services as the Society may require.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Committee, to keep a record of all similar Societies, of which they gain information, their location and numbers; to correspond with them, from time to time as occasion may require; and to lay before the Society at its meetings, all information in their possession.

ART. 7. It shall be the duty of the Editorial Committee, to inspect all original and selected matter that may be presented for publication in the "Mutual Rights," and to suffer no matter to be published in that work until it shall have received the approbation of a majority of said Committee;—to employ a person to print the necessary number of copies of forty octavo pages, each, per month;—to solicit subscribers and patrons for the publication; and generally, to do all matters and things, which in their opinion, are calculated to promote the circulation and usefulness of the work.

ART. 8. An annual meeting of the Society shall be held on the first Tuesday in July in each year, and after having transacted such business as may be submitted for their consideration, shall proceed to elect their officers for the ensuing year. On the election of the Editorial Committee, every member of a similar Society, in any other place, and any brother from a distance, known to be friendly to reform, shall, if present, be entitled to a vote, in the same manner as any member residing in Baltimore.

ART. 9. A monthly meeting of the Society shall be held on the first Tuesday of each month.

ART. 10. Any member of the Methodist Church may become a member of this Society, by a vote of the same, and by signing the Constitution—and it is expected of every person wishing to withdraw from the association, to signify his desire to the Secretary.

ART. 11. This Constitution may be altered or amended at any regular meeting by a majority of two-thirds of the

members present, provided such alteration shall have been proposed at a previous meeting.

---

The following Circular was prepared by the committee appointed for that service and was forwarded as directed.

*Circular addressed to the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

An expectation was entertained by the friends of reform, attached to the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the United States, that the General Conference of 1824, would have made some important and salutary improvements in the government;—that the congregated wisdom and experience of that body, would have renounced all pretensions to govern the Church without her consent, and that, by a well-timed measure, they would have paved the way for an equitable Church representation. But, we are sorry to say, that our hopes have not been realized, and that very little has been done favourable to these views.

In consequence of this disappointment, and with an intention to prevent any evils which it may have a tendency to produce, it is thought advisable to address a Circular to all the friends of reform in the connexion, exhorting them not to suffer these unpleasant circumstances to alienate their affections from the Church, nor to induce them to leave her communion, but rather to consider them as admonitions calling the more loudly upon all her friends, to cleave to her to the last extremity, and to unite as one man in a mutual and general effort to obtain, by the voice of a majority of the ministry and membership, a representative form of Church gov-

ernment, which shall extend to the people as well as to the preachers. This enterprize will certainly be accelerated by promoting the circulation of such periodical publications, as are of a respectable and redeeming character;—and by raising societies, whose duty it shall be to disseminate the principles of religious liberty, which need only to be known to ensure their adoption;—each society appointing a corresponding committee, to communicate its operations to such similar institutions as may be formed throughout the United States.

There can be no question as to the efficiency and final result of these measures. They must speedily eventuate in the accomplishment of the necessary reform, and consequently in the union and stability of our Zion. The effects produced in the last four years, fully justify this expectation; inasmuch as the late General Conference was nearly equally divided, and that too notwithstanding all the opposition to reform; and it is our decided opinion, that if the elections held at the Annual Conferences south and west of the Susquehannah, had been conducted in the usual manner, without recourse to management, the majority in the General Conference of 1824, would have been of a very different character; we are sorry to add, moreover, that those ministers, who, by the management referred to, were excluded from seats in the General Conference, are such, as are generally considered the ablest members of their respective Annual Conferences. From these facts we may safely infer, that the fallow ground of the great work of improvement is already broken up, and that at the next General Conference we may expect to realize our hopes.

Besides, in almost every section of this vastly extended community, there are enlightened and pious men, who are ready to put their shoulders to the work, so that the efforts which we are about to make, will be extensive and simultaneous; and well calculated to effect a reformation without endangering the unity of the body. We shall move forward, hand in hand, whilst hundreds of the most important men, belonging to the itinerancy, bid us God speed, waiting only to hear the voice of the people, and they will co-operate with us.

Attempts have been made to alarm the ignorant, with fears, lest a reformation should darken the prospect of itinerant ministers, and drive them from the work. Upon this subject the feelings of Methodists are one, and all unite in one common purpose to perpetuate and support the itinerant ministry. Their rights and ours are mutual; and we, the committee, selected by our brethren, for the purpose of sending forth this Circular, call upon every department of our community to unite with us in asserting and defending the mutual rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

SAM'L K. JENNINGS, *Chairman of Comm.*

JOHN FRENCH, *Secretary.*

---

The Editorial Committee being appointed, commenced the publication of the "Mutual Rights," with the following Editorial Address.

*Editorial Address.*

It will be expected of the Editorial Committee, at the commencement of the arduous and responsible duty assigned to them by their brethren, to give some ac-

count of the motives which have influenced them to accept the appointment; and of the principles by which they are to be governed in the publication of the "Mutual Rights." With a view, therefore, to gratify this reasonable expectation, the Committee take occasion to assure their readers, that the paramount consideration which has induced them to embark in this service, is a settled conviction, that an acknowledgment of the rights of each department in the Church, is essential to the well-being of the whole; and that the future prosperity of Methodism, in these United States, materially depends on such a modification of our Church government, as shall put every Methodist in full possession of his rights and privileges as a christian believer. As individuals they have long deplored the unscriptural and injudicious monopoly of power, that has placed in the hands of the itinerant ministry *alone*, the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and after a careful investigation of its nature and tendencies, taking into view the enlightened state of society in this country, they are persuaded, that nothing less than an improved government, which will secure representation to the *whole Church*, and a mutual participation in all her concerns, will produce tranquility. It will be obvious then to every reader, that the motives which have influenced the Committee, are neither sordid nor selfish, but liberal and disinterested, and that the principles by which they intend to be governed in editing the contemplated work, are the mutual rights of the ministers and members of our Church. The chief object of the publication is to realize to the Church a practical understanding of the title it assumes. This can be done *only through the medium of a free press*. The Committee are confident,

that if the Methodist people have a suitable opportunity to compare the arguments adduced on both sides of the great question of reform, permanent harmony may be established among them. Without this, they are equally confident, that the difference of sentiment which now so extensively prevails, will accelerate an equally extensive alienation of affection, and ultimately terminate in great and ruinous secessions from the Church. That the Methodist Church is in a state of agitation, is a well known fact. And such a state of things calls loudly upon every friend of religion, to inquire into the causes which produce it, and to labour for the restoration of harmony, and the preservation of brotherly love. To be prepared, however, to perform a becoming part in this important work, it is necessary to enter upon a calm and dispassionate consideration of the subjects in dispute. Modest men will feel no difficulty in admitting the truth of this position: for it is impossible for any man wisely to estimate his own opinions, when they differ from those of other men, until he shall have first subjected them to a respectful and scrupulous comparison with the opinions of those who think differently.

To the doctrines of religion, as taught by Wesley and Fletcher, and as embodied in the discipline of our Church, the Committee fully subscribe. The services of the Church, such as extemporaneous prayer and preaching, sacrament of the Lord's Supper, baptism, love feasts, band meeting, and class meeting, have their entire approbation. Class meeting particularly, in the opinion of the Committee, is the great means, next to the Gospel itself, by which spirituality and order are to be perpetuated *among our* people. Upon this subject they must be permitted to say, they have been trained



so long under these doctrines and services, that they feel for them all those attachments so natural to men in similar circumstances. And in fact, it is because of these, and the spirituality of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that they adhere so firmly to her communion.

It is not in the power of the Committee at present, to give exact information of every thing which the publication will contain. A periodical miscellany admits of a variety of subjects, and when continued for a length of time, receives many communications unknown to the editors at the commencement of the work. It may be said, however, in general terms, the "Mutual Rights" will contain essays on Church government, biographical sketches of eminent and pious persons, lectures on divinity and practical christianity, interesting narratives, philosophical investigations, and a variety of other matter, both amusing and instructive. Well written communications on any of the above subjects will be thankfully received and the utmost impartiality observed by the Committee.

---

Several anti-reformers availed themselves of this free press, and wrote essays in vindication of the Methodist government, as being of divine origin, and the only legitimate Church government on earth; and represented the Reformers as "backsliders,"—"under the influence of base motives,"—"enemies of Methodism,"—"opposers of God,"—"instigated by the Devil," &c. &c. Indeed this kind of abusive matter, and mere declamation, from anti-reformers, accumulated to such a degree, that the editorial committee of the second volume were under the necessity of restricting those writers to *argument* alone.

During the year 1824, Union Societies were formed in different parts of the United States, having the *same objects in view* as the Society in Baltimore; yet, the men in power were much offended at their organization, and threatened those who joined them with excommunication. They argued that the Methodist people had *no right* to form themselves into societies for the purposes stated; and their forming such societies was an act of "*opposition*" to the government of the Church. Finding their threats did not deter the members from doing what they knew was their right to do, (as neither the discipline nor the Word of God forbade it,) the itinerant preachers "commenced a war of extermination," and began with the intended members of a contemplated Union Society of Bedford County, Tennessee. The presiding elder at a quarterly meeting, at the close of his sermon, on Saturday, publicly read out the names of fourteen official members (some of whom were preachers,) living in different circuits, and declared, that "these brethren had put themselves out of the Church, and were no longer to be considered Methodists."

The offence those brethren had committed, was, that in February, 1825, they had held a meeting for the purpose of raising a Union Society. At which meeting, however, nothing decisive was done, except that all who were in favour of any alterations or amendments in the Discipline, agreed to have their names put on a paper to that effect. The meeting then adjourned until May following. In April, *previously* to this second meeting, and "*before* the committee (appointed to prepare a Constitution) had agreed upon any plan," the presiding elder read the fourteen persons out of the Church. In May, the Union Society was organized; after which

“one local preacher after another was cited to trial, and suspended.”—And the quarterly meeting Conferences uniformly expelled them from the Church. And those in power emphatically declared, “that so soon as they should get the trials of all the official members completed, if the private members would not *abandon the Union Society*, these also should be turned out.” The part of the Constitution of this Union Society, to which the itinerant preachers took the greatest exception, was the following: “and that this amendment should introduce an equilibrium in said Church, by admitting a *representation* from the local preachers and laymen, equal to that of the itinerant ministers.”

During this year Reformers were made to feel the displeasure of the advocates of power in many ways, and in almost every part of the country. Some of our brethren whose chief dependence for the support of their families, lay with anti-reformers, were reduced to great difficulties, and were made to suffer many privations. Others were shamefully traduced and represented to the public as utterly unworthy of the confidence and respect of the community.

In the spring of the following year, (1826,) the Baltimore Union Society “recommended *Conventions* to be assembled in the several States of the Union, where brethren were inclined to adopt the measure, for the exclusive purpose of making inquiry into the propriety and expediency of asking for a *representation*; and taking measures preparatory to the formation of a memorial expressly upon that subject.” “Each State Convention to elect one or more delegates, to meet in a General Convention at some suitable time and place, for the express purpose of preparing a memorial to the next General Conference.”

This plan was projected for the purpose of concentrating the views of Reformers generally on the subject of *representation*, that all might speak the same language in *one* memorial, and thus prevent the recurrence of the pretext resorted to by the General Conference of 1824. The City of Baltimore was subsequently fixed on as the most suitable place, and November 15, 1827, the period for holding the General Convention.

State Conventions were accordingly held; at all of which delegates were elected. That for Maryland and the District of Columbia, was held in Baltimore, on the 15th and 16th November, 1826. The members of this Convention were aged ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church; several of them had been in her service nearly half a century. The official members of the Baltimore City Station endeavoured, after the rise of the Convention, to bring it into contempt, by a publication in the newspapers. But they were replied to by a committee of the Union Society, and fairly beaten on their own ground, and made appear ridiculous before the public.

About this time a persecution of Reformers was commenced by the itinerant preachers in North Carolina. A false accusation was brought against certain members of the Granville Union Society, as inveighers against the discipline. The preacher on the trial, failing to prove his charge, put the following question to the jury: "*You that believe their being members of the Union Society will have a bad effect, will rise up.*" A majority of those present were of that opinion and rose up, upon which *the preacher read them out as expelled*. The case of the brethren thus shamefully expelled was brought before the Virginia Annual Conference, and that body

decided, "that it *was not mal-administration*," and thus justified this preacher in his outrageous conduct. The following is an extract of a letter from Rev. Willis Harris, of Granville, North Carolina, dated Petersburg, Virginia, February 22, 1827.

"The Virginia Annual Conference, which sat in this place, has just risen. The Granville Union Society of North Carolina, presented to it a petition, praying that seven members, lately expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church for joining the Granville Union Society, be restored to their former standing. The petitioners alleged, that although the charge exhibited against them was that of inveighing against the discipline, yet, nothing was proved against them on the trial, but their having joined the Granville Union Society. That, when the preacher found he could not substantiate his charge, he put the following question to the Society: 'You that believe their being members of the Union Society will have a bad effect, will rise up.' That a majority of those present were of that opinion and rose up, upon which the preacher read them out as expelled. With the petition, the Granville Union Society presented a charge against the preacher for mal-administration: but the Conference decided that it was not mal-administration. Thus the door is closed on our unfortunate brethren, and opened for all the Reformers to be pushed out of the Church."

It is here worthy of remark, 1. Those brethren were excommunicated for *no act of immorality*—for the neglect of *no christian duty*—nor for the dissemination of false doctrines. 2. They were not expelled for the *violation of any rule of discipline*; for though charged with inveighing against the discipline, the charge was not sustained. 3. They were expelled *for becoming*

*members of a Union Society*, the avowed design of which, according to its constitution, was, "for the purpose of corresponding with the brethren within the United States, who are favourable to a reform, on such subjects as will tend to improve the form of our Church government." 4. They were expelled for joining said Union Society, *not* because this act was a violation of any law, divine or human, but because, in the opinion of the preacher and a majority of those present at the trial, "Their being members of the Union Society, *would have a bad effect.*" 5. Notwithstanding the obvious injustice of this act, and the tyrannical conduct of the preacher in charge, yet, the Virginia Annual Conference, with three bishops present, decided that the act of expulsion "*was not mal-administration!!*"

We will here subjoin the reflections of a travelling preacher, published in the *Mutual Rights* at the time, as they accord exactly with our own views on this outrageous procedure.

"Our Virginia brethren, in expelling those members in such a lordly manner, practically assumed the principle, that in their administration they need no law at all, save the *will* of the executive officer. He put the question, 'You who believe that their being members of the Union Society, will have a bad effect, will rise up.' What law can this brother find, even in the discipline, which says a committee or society have authority to expel members for any thing which they 'believe will have a bad effect?' This would put supreme power in a court of judicature, and would supercede the necessity of every other law. Let the legislature pass a law, that the courts may condemn men for any thing, which they may 'believe will have a bad effect,' and this law

alone will be sufficient to regulate all judicial proceedings. Such was the conduct of the preacher in charge. Who might as well have said, 'You who *wish* the brethren expelled will rise up.'"—“By the late act of the Virginia Annual Conference, in sanctioning the administration of Benton Field and others, it is practically avowed, that the Methodist people are not under the government of laws at all. There must first be a law in existence, by which members can be expelled for doing what the court may believe ‘will have a bad effect,’ before the preacher in charge can *execute* such a law; there must first be an act of the legislature, saying, members shall be expelled for joining a Union Society, or signing its constitution, before an executive officer can arrest members under such a law, and before a jury can have authority to judge of their innocence or guilt in the breach of it. This conduct is worse than the passing *an ex post facto* law, which according to the American Constitution is destructive of civil liberty, and inconsistent with all good government.”



## CHAPTER VIII.

PERSECUTION OF REFORMERS IN MARYLAND.—REV. DENNIS B. DORSEY'S ACCOUNT OF HIS PERSECUTIONS IN THE BALTIMORE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.—MR. GIDEON DAVIS' LETTER TO CORRESPONDING COMMITTEE.—REV. ASA SHINN'S ADDRESS TO THE CONFERENCE.—PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNION SOCIETY IN RELATION TO MR. DORSEY'S CASE.—REV. C. SPRINGER'S LETTER TO MR. DORSEY.

THE persecution of Reformers now became very general. No preacher who was a Reformer could obtain deacons' or elders' orders, no matter how well recommended, or how necessary his services in the neighbourhood where he resided; nor could a preacher get into the itinerancy who was known to be in favour of reform in the government of the Church. Licensed preachers were broken by the Quarterly Conferences refusing to renew their licenses. The Baltimore Annual Conference, at its session in 1827, arraigned and tried, censured and admonished one of its members, Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, for recommending the Mutual Rights to the attention of *an individual*; and he was deprived of an official appointment because he would not yield *implicit obedience* to the dictation of the Conference, which required him to withhold his agency and influence, in future, from the circulation and promotion of any such a work.

Reformers throughout the United States, viewed this act of the Baltimore Annual Conference, as unjustifiably oppressive of an individual Reformer, who happened to

fall immediately under their power, as unwarranted by the Holy Scriptures, or the discipline of the Church; and as evincing a disposition, on the part of the preachers, to keep the people in ignorance of the true principles of Church government. Resolutions were accordingly passed by the different Union Societies, and associated bodies of Reformers, disapproving of the conduct of the Conference, and consoling Mr. Dorsey on account of his afflictions and sufferings in the cause of truth. Several travelling preachers likewise, expressed their utter abhorrence of this act of cruelty, inflicted on a fellow-labourer in the word and doctrine; and expressed their indignation in much stronger language than was used by any of the Union Societies.

As the act of the Baltimore Annual Conference in brother Dorsey's case, was viewed by the reformers, in all parts of the country, as unjustifiably rigorous and oppressive, we will record it somewhat in detail. The best account of the entire transaction is communicated in a letter from brother Dorsey to the Rev. Henry B. Bascom, who had made special inquiry as to the facts of the case.

*Letter from Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey to Rev. H. B. Bascom.*

*Rev. and Dear Sir,*—I have had the pleasure of reading your affectionate communication, addressed to me through the medium of the Mutual Rights, and now enjoy the equal pleasure of returning you, through the same medium, my grateful acknowledgments for the solicitude you evince on my behalf. In the meantime I am not unmindful of the great principles, on which this matter is predicated, of which I presume you are an advocate. And as you put several interrogatories rela-

tive to the case, for your personal information, I will give you a glance at the whole affair. I am the more inclined to this than to entire silence, under existing circumstances, for two reasons. The first regards the reputation of our conference, which is as liable to be tarnished as my own; and the second is grounded on the special regard which I must necessarily feel for my own character, as a christian, and a minister of the gospel. This brief history shall be given from my best recollections, and the least exceptionable means of information. If there should be any apparent mis-statement, I hope no brother will attribute it to design; and that if any one be prepared to correct it, he will do so through this *public* medium, before he undertake to contradict or criminate in a *private manner*.

Some time last February, I wrote a few lines to a friend, Mr. Hugh M. Sharp, in which I gave him information "of a work on Church Government publishing in Baltimore, by a committee of Methodist preachers and members, exposing to open view, some of the errors in our government and administration." I also informed him that the work "was a very satisfactory one, well worth his attention;" that I had "taken it more than eighteen months, and was well pleased with it;" that it contained so many pages, and came at so much per year; that several in that part took it, and were well pleased with it; and, finally requested him to let me know immediately, if he desired to have the work, and to inquire of a brother, whom I named, whether *he* would take it also. In conclusion, I remarked to him, "You need not mention this to any other person, if you please." But when Mr. Robert Minshall, the preacher in charge of Huntingdon circuit came round, my friend Sharp betrayed

me, by giving him my letter to read. Mr. Minshall then, according to his own telling in conference, asked him for a copy of the letter; to which he replied that he might have the *original*, as it was of no use to him.

About this time there was a letter written by Mr. Minshall, to Mr. David Steele, giving him information, that I was actively engaged in circulating the Mutual Rights, and probably censuring me for such conduct. This information was communicated to Mr. John Davis, who, in his turn reported it again, until, finally, it was brought before the late Annual Conference, first in the form of an *objection*, and then as a *charge*.

After the commencement of the conference, I had an interview with Mr. Davis, who gave me an assurance, that as I would give him no satisfaction in his interrogatives, he could not *pass over* it on the examination of my character. Accordingly, when my name was called, in the examination of characters, Mr. S. G. Roszel arose and made some *objections*, stating, as I was informed by members of conference, (for I was too unwell to be present,) that I had been away from my circuit during the last year, under the *pretence* of being *afflicted*, but had been travelling extensively, circulating a work derogatory to the interests of the Church. My case was then postponed until I could be present.

The following, or second day after, I was present, when my name was called, and the inquiry instituted, whether there was any thing against my character: certain members of the conference replied that there *was*, but the brother who had made the objection was absent. Mr. Roszel being sent for, came in and stated his objection, on the ground above mentioned. This led to reference for information, and Messrs. Steele and Min-

shall, were referred to as informants. My letter was now produced by Mr. Minshall, who stated how he obtained it; and intimated that it had now accidentally come in place, as he thought when he obtained it, might some time be the case. The letter was then read, and the President, Mr. Soule, remarked, that if I had any thing to say in reply, I was now at liberty to speak for myself. As I saw no formal *charge*, I had nothing to say, only to acknowledge the letter read to be my own production. I then retired, and after considerable deliberation on the subject, the case was decided. Some brother, in passing out of the conference, remarked to me that I could now go in, which left me under the impression that my character had passed. I then went in and remained until conference adjourned; but heard no official announcement of the decision until the next day. I learned however, in the mean time, the nature of the decision, in part, but could find no one to give it to me in full.

The next morning when the journal of the preceding day was read, there was a formal charge recorded, which was "*for having been actively engaged in the circulation of an improper periodical work.*" The President then announced to me from the chair, that the decision of the conference in my case was, "*that my character should pass, upon my being admonished by the President; and promising the conference that I would desist from taking any agency in spreading or supporting any publications in opposition to our discipline or government.*" The admonition was then given from the chair, after I had signified my disposition to submit to it, for the sake of brethren's consciences. I was then required to give a pledge that I would comply with the

latter part of the resolution; which I *refused* to do, while the resolution remained in its unqualified form. I then replied to all the important items of the admonition, and gave my reasons for not complying with the latter part of the resolution. The following is the substance:

*Mr. President*,—With you I admit the importance of clearly ascertaining that we have *found* the truth, before we undertake to *communicate* it; and that when we do communicate it, we ought to be careful to cultivate the spirit of christianity, lest it be attended with greater injury than good, to our fellow men. These considerations have governed me throughout: and God forbid I should *ever* depart from them!

As it regards the allusion to my promises before I received ordination, to be obedient to my superiors, and not to “mend our rules but keep them,”\* I reply, that I regret exceedingly, that when I made such promises, I was not better qualified to *judge* of our discipline and government. I was young, inexperienced and uninformed. I perceived no errors in either of these. But, sir, if I *now* had to pass that examination, I should certainly be strict in *qualifying* my promises, as I do believe there are *rules* of *discipline*, as well as *practices*, in our *administration*, which ought to be modified.

I do, sir, as firmly and fully believe in our *doctrines*, generally, as any brother; and have endeavoured since I became a member of our Church, to obey them: nor do I now feel any abatement of my purpose, to persevere in this path of duty to the end, by the Grace of God assisting me. I have uniformly recommended our *discipline* to others, as well as laboured to conform to its mandates myself: and in this course too, I feel in-

\*Mr Dorsey neither broke the “rules” nor mended them.

clined to persevere, until some better modification of them shall be introduced by the proper authority of the Church, or until they be repealed. And as to the grand *fundamentals* of our *government*, (meaning the itinerant operations,) no member of this conference feels more disposed to support them than I do. But, sir, believing as I do, that there are some of the minutia of our discipline and government, which could be modified to advantage, I wish to enjoy the privilege of examining the subject, by reading ecclesiastical history, the Mutual Rights, or any thing else which will afford me the necessary information. And when I am fully convinced that I have obtained a knowledge of the truth, I desire the privilege of *communicating* it in the best possible manner to the Church and the world, either verbally or otherwise. And, although I should rejoice to have the sanction of this conference, in so doing, yet if it *cannot* be obtained, I must beg the privilege of pursuing the course which my judgment and conscience dictate.

You admit that the *preachers* have a right to *read* and *examine* the Mutual Rights, or any thing else they please. And is it not admitted that they have the same right to communicate to *others*, what they learn? Are we to retain our information, and neither speak nor write about it? No, sir, I cannot suffer any man, or body of men, to trammel my rational faculties, in their search for truth; nor to restrain them from promulgating it when obtained: and I now reserve to myself the entire privilege of doing so, either verbally, or in any other manner I judge most expedient.

I have read the Mutual Rights, sir, for myself, and think highly of the work, and recommend it to every member of this conference.



The *bishops themselves* read it,—the *preachers* read it,—the *book agents* read it, and exchange the Methodist Magazine for it;—and will any one say, that the *people* have no right to read it? Without an act of reason, my intelligence itself on the first blush of the subject, forces this language upon me:—If *bishops, preachers, and book agents* read this work with impunity, then all the *members* of our Church, ought to enjoy the same privilege. But I must come to the conclusion and application of this argument.—If the members have as good a right to read the Mutual Rights, as the ministry, (which all must admit, or else deny that they are free,) and if the ministers *undoubtedly have* this right, as has been admitted on this floor, by bishops and others, then there is no argument to set aside the consequence, that it is the right of any preacher to *recommend* the work to the people, if he judge it would be profitable to them. [And every attempt to inflict punishment on a preacher for recommending it to the people, is an absolute, though indirect, declaration, that they are *not* at liberty to read and examine for themselves.] And if it be a preacher's *right*, how can you punish me for so doing? Yet I have been punished with an *admonition*, for *recommending* the Mutual Rights to one or two members; for this is all the proof you had against me.

After this I retired, and the sense of the conference was taken, whether my reply was satisfactory, and the vote was given in the negative. I was again called in and interrogated on the subject; but replied as before, in *my own* language, qualifying my promises, and yielding *so far* as I could, without sacrificing the clearest dictates of my judgment and conscience. I *again* retired, and as I was informed, the question, “whether

my character pass," was again put to the conference, and answered by a vote in the negative. It was then "moved, that the case be postponed till to-morrow."

The next day the case was again resumed, and I was once more interrogated. I replied in substance as follows:

*Mr. President*,—Upon a candid re-examination of the subject, I am prepared to reiterate the remarks which I offered yesterday, relative to my disposition to render a respectful obedience to our discipline and government. But I request the conference, if they please, to favour me with the *rule of discipline* on which I have been *charged, tried, and punished*, that I may be better prepared to conclude how to shape my course. (No law was given.) If there *be* any rule, and you have proceeded according to it, then I am subject to no *further* penalty, unless I can be punished twice for the same offence.

It has just now been suggested to me, by a brother at my left hand, that there is a law of the General Conference, passed at their last session, *requiring* our preachers not to become agents for other booksellers, &c. Now, supposing this law to apply to the case in hand, (which we believe it will not,) *I* knew nothing about its existence until half an hour ago; and how then could I *keep or break* it? *It is not in our discipline.* A law must be promulgated before it can be in force: for, "where there is no *law*, there" can be "no *transgression*." How then can I be punished for the transgression of *that* law? I feel myself as much bound as any member of this conference, to keep the laws of the General Conference, until they shall be amended or repealed. When I violate any one of those laws, I am

amenable at this tribunal; and, if found guilty, subject to punishment; and am willing to submit to it. But I cannot be punished *now* for an offence which I *may* or *may not* commit hereafter, without a violation of justice.

Moreover, it has been suggested, (by the president,) that an "Annual Conference has authority to make rules and regulations for its own members." Admitted. *Rules* and *regulations* are not *laws* to regulate *moral conduct*, I presume. This conference is now sitting in an *executive*, or *legislative capacity*. If the former, then not the latter; and if the latter, not the former. If you are sitting in an *executive capacity*, how can you *enact* laws for yourselves to execute? If in a *legislative capacity*, how can you *execute* your own laws? Unless you prove that these two powers should be united in one body; which would *astonish* my understanding, and form a monstrous anomaly in ecclesiastical government, in *this country*.

But if this conference *had* the power both to *enact* laws for the regulation of the moral characters of its members, and to *execute* such laws, when enacted, surely none would argue that you had authority to punish one of your members for a breach of a law *before* it is *broken*, or even *enacted*! And when was the law enacted, which prohibits any of your body from *recommending* the Mutual Rights?—the supposed offence for which I have suffered the punishment of an admonition.

I might easily say much more on the subject: for it is one of the deepest moment to me: but suffer me to close my remarks, by referring brethren to the many hard things which some of them have said on this floor; and also, to what some of them have written and published, in opposition to certain parts of our discipline

and government; and let me request them to refer to those things, when they shall give their vote in this case.

I now retired again; and Mr. Roszel offered the following motion: "*moved that the character of brother Dorsey pass, upon his being reproved by the president, for his contumacy in resisting the authority of the conference.*" This motion did not prevail. The following motion was then offered by Mr. Job Guest, but written, as the secretary says, by Mr. F. S. Evans: "*Moved and seconded, that the bishops be, and hereby are requested not to give Dennis B. Dorsey an appointment for the present year, and that his name be so returned on the minutes, with the reasons assigned, why he has not an appointment; viz. his contumacy in regard to the authority of the conference.*" This motion was divided, and the first and second parts adopted separately. The resolution being read to me, when called in, I requested a transcript from the journal, of all the proceedings in the case; and signified a probability of my appealing to the General Conference against their decisions. My request was laid over, however, till the next day.

When the case was called up on the following day, on motion of Mr. Joshua Wells, it was resolved, that the last resolution passed on yesterday, relative to the return of the name on the minutes, be amended, and "that the words, '*with the reasons assigned why he has not an appointment; viz. his contumacy in regard to the authority of the conference,*' be retained on the journal, but not published in the minutes." This motion was adopted.—The same day, as I could not be present on account of bodily indisposition, I wrote to the conference, informing them of my determination to appeal to the General Conference, and requested them to pass a

resolution, that this appeal be inserted in the minutes along with their former resolution. In that letter I renewed my request for a transcript from the journals. Mr. Robert Cadden then moved, that my "*request be not granted.*" The secretary, Mr. Waugh, and others, made some remarks on the impropriety of my obtaining such a document, without some restraint not to publish it until the General Conference. This motion was lost. After this, it was, on motion of Mr. Roszel, "*resolved that*" my "*request be granted.*"

Thus, dear sir, you have an outline of this afflictive and protracted trial; and you are now left to form your own opinion concerning the nature and grounds of the charge—the manner in which it was introduced—the proofs by which it was sustained—the decisions of the conference on the case—and my merit or demerit of the penalties inflicted.

Soliciting an interest in your petitions to the God of all grace, that I may have that love which "endureth all things," and "thinketh no evil," I subscribe myself, dear brother, your fellow-labourer in the cause of religious liberty, and in the ministry of reconciliation.

DENNIS B. DORSEY.

*Baltimore, May 15th, 1827.*

---

It will be proper to follow up this narrative with several communications from certain individuals, which will exhibit the effect this act of injustice had on the minds of many of the preachers, and other reformers.

*Letter addressed to a member of the Corresponding Committee, dated,*

GEORGETOWN, D. C., *April 25th, 1827.*

*Dear Brother,*—Your letter of the 21st inst. came duly to hand. Its contents gave me great pain. The conduct of the Baltimore conference towards brother Dorsey, is of itself quite sufficient to satisfy every unprejudiced mind, of the necessity of relieving our travelling preachers of a little of that “brief authority” whose influence is so contrary to that charity which thinketh no evil, and is kind, and which puffeth not up.

When we look at the past, and reflect upon passing events, although we have in some respects great cause for gratitude for the moral and intellectual improvement of the world, yet it must be acknowledged, in the midst of our advantages, that bigotry still sits like an Incubus upon the understanding of many—to stifle free inquiry, and to prevent the reception and advancement of truth.

In the 5th century, Acacias, bishop of Constantinople, was expelled the Church by the decree of an Italian council, for denying the *supremacy* of the bishop of Rome. In the 19th century it appears the Baltimore conference has by its decree censured brother Dorsey for circulating a work which denies the *supremacy* of the clergy to make laws for the laity, without their concurrence.

John Huss, the great and pious reformer, was condemned to death by the council of Constance, because he would not “obey the order of the council, which commanded him to plead guilty, against the dictates of his conscience”—brother Dorsey was punished because among other things, he did not feel disposed to answer

questions to convict himself, and because he would not promise against his judgment and conscience, to cease from circulating a work which he considered advocated the cause of truth and just principles.

Luther was condemned without any pretence, of a charge against his moral character, by the Diet of Worms—our brother Dorsey, whose character and piety are acknowledged to be unquestionable, has been punished by the conference of Baltimore.

The council of Trent voted, "that the Holy Scriptures were not composed for the use of the multitude, but only for that of their spiritual teachers—and ordered that these divine records be taken from the *people*. The Baltimore conference voted that brother Dorsey be reprimanded by the chair for having advised *the people* to read the Mutual Rights, and inform themselves upon the subject of church government—although many who voted for the resolution read the work themselves. By which it may be fairly inferred that they wish to keep the *people* in ignorance of their rights and privileges as christians.

The pious Waldenses were persecuted by the Romish Church, for their piety and zeal in a good cause; but pious and independent reformers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, for a mere difference of opinion upon Church government, are persecuted and expelled by their own brethren.

Two parties of the Calvinists—the Superlapsarians, and the Sublapsarians, united to condemn the Arminians for teaching that the goodness of God in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ extended to *all mankind*; and at the council of Dort, obtained a sentence against them by which they "were declared corrupters of true



religion." The bishops-men, and the anti-bishops-men, in the Baltimore conference united to punish brother Dorsey for circulating a work which denies that the travelling preachers alone, are the *elect* from the foundation of the world, to make laws for the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church. And to conclude these parallel cases—the eloquent Chrysostom was condemned to banishment by the council of Chalcedon—but “the *people*, who were tenderly attached to their pious and worthy bishop, prevented the execution of this unrighteous sentence”—and I hope, as the Baltimore conference has for the reasons stated, deprived brother Dorsey of a *support* for the ensuing year, by refusing to give him an appointment, that the *people* will shew that they are “tenderly attached” to him, and to all those who thus suffer for the truth; and that they will prevent as far as possible the punishment thus intended to be inflicted, by affording him a comfortable support during that period.

I feel myself authorized to say, that the reformers here sincerely sympathize with him in his afflictions growing out of this outrage upon his rights, and as a small testimony of attachment to the cause of truth, I enclose to you herewith in their behalf \$20, which you will be pleased to present to him with the assurances of our most affectionate regard. Justice to brother Dorsey requires that a fair and candid statement of his case be made to the public, for I have discovered already a disposition in some to cast a mist over this transaction, and thus to keep out of view the prominent fact in the case.

The experience of a few weeks is quite sufficient to convince every impartial mind, that those in power are determined to push matters to extremities—and conse-

quently it is highly important that the feelings and sentiments of reformers should be united by the strongest cords of friendship, union and brotherly affection. In the midst of the unpleasant scenes which surround us, let us watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation and thereby give evidence, that reformers want reforming themselves.

Yours in the bonds of christian affection,

GIDEON DAVIS.

---

The following calm and dispassionate Address to the members of the Baltimore Annual Conference, was written by the Rev. Asa Shinn, a travelling preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and published in the Mutual Rights, immediately after the persecution of brother Dorsey.

*A short Address to the members of the Baltimore Annual Conference, by Bartimeus.*

*Fathers and Brethren,*—Permit an old friend, and an old member of your conference, to address you in the language of mildness and expostulation. One who was brought out of the kingdom of darkness, by the instrumentality of the Methodist ministry, and who has been raised up among you, as an advocate for the pure doctrines of original Methodism. One who, in the twenty-second year of his age, being ordered by the bishop far hence into the wilderness, was noticed by a distinguished member of your conference, who, casting a benevolent glance at the timid young man, silently retired from the busy scenes of the day, and went from house to house, to procure a little money from the generous friends in Baltimore, to aid him through the dangers and hazards

of his western tour. A member this, who then stood so high in your ranks, and in the public estimation, that when he had an appointment to preach, his name was previously announced from the pulpit, that the citizens might know when they could have an opportunity to hear him. What distinguished member of your conference was this? It was none other than that same Nicholas Snethen, who is now regarded as the great troubler of Israel. That mild, inoffensive man of God, who, for more than thirty years, through a variety of trying circumstances, has held fast his righteousness, and maintained his integrity. Shall I forget thee, Snethen! Now the shafts of reproach fly thick around; shall I hide myself, and leave thee to the peltings of the storm? I have arisen, thou knowest, to aid thee in the mighty contest, and to share in thy reproach. I will be thy fellow-labourer through the cloudy and dark day, until summer suns shall break the dense vapours of the storm, and clear up the troubled atmosphere. Then like weather-beaten and war-worn soldiers, lifting our eyes to the tranquil stillness of the heavens, and looking abroad through the surrounding beauties of spiritual vegetation, we will sing together:—"For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell."

You my brethren, who are yet members of the Baltimore Annual Conference, will forgive this involuntary digression, this grateful recollection of past events, and pleasant anticipation of the future, while I solicit your attention to the intended suggestions of the present Address.

I am not insensible of my obligations to you, and have long admired that dignity and intelligence, which have caused you to hold a distinguished rank among the Annual Conferences of the United States. You possess advantages which other conferences do not. Occupying a central situation, and having easy access to the first sources of information, you have it in your power to sustain a valuable weight of influence, and to stand among the most useful bodies of men in our nation. The principles of reform have long been in operation among you; and you have had ample means to know and appreciate the evidence on which they rest. I retain a lively recollection of the times and seasons, when an Emory, a Ryland, and a Griffith made a noble stand on your floor, and when other intelligent brethren with them, plead the cause of liberty, against the dangerous accumulations of ecclesiastical power. Whence is it, then, that in your late session you have laid an embargo upon the Mutual Rights? Is Emory gone from among you? Is the voice of Ryland no more heard? Has Griffith retired to the mournful solitudes of discouraged silence? And have Waugh and Davis found out, that truth reaches too deep to be safely followed in all its connections? Does the thunder of S. G. R. still terrify the rising ministry? And have your young men "stipulated" to enjoy the consolation of passive obedience and non-resistance? Whence is it, that these dismal tidings have come out from Baltimore? Refusing to notice our arguments, and unable to obstruct their influence on society, by manoeuvre, are you now resolved that absolute authority shall take our citadel by storm? An embargo is not unfrequently a harbinger for an open declaration of war; and we may so regard it, perhaps in the present case.

. You have resolved, have you? that the members of your conference shall not recommend or circulate the Mutual Rights. Why is this? Have you given any reason for such an extraordinary resolution? Or have you avowed your determination, not to enter into any "discussion or controversy" upon the subject? If you will not give a reason for your conduct, let your expositulating brethren do it for you. We think the plain English reason why you will not read the Mutual Rights, is, that the work contains more truth than you are willing to endure. Ecclesiastical power will not come to the light, lest its deeds should be reprov'd.

You have laid the heavy arm of authority on a young man, it is said, because he has recommended and circulated our periodical publication. Have you any law for this? Where is it? In the discipline? In the Scriptures? In the codes of the United States, or of the State of Maryland? If in none of these, must you not own that it was a perfectly *lawless act*? And is the Baltimore Annual Conference *without law* to God? or is she *under the law to Christ*?

Brethren, what do you intend to do? To prohibit the freedom of inquiry, and of reading, is a greater outrage upon civil liberty, than to take away the freedom of speech, or of the press. It is rumoured that some great man among you, intends publicly to vindicate the conduct of the Baltimore Annual Conference, in this case. If I cannot fairly shew his arguments to be inconclusive, I promise I will yield to them, and give up the cause of reform.

If you forbid travelling preachers to circulate the Mutual Rights, why not lay the same prohibition upon the local preachers, and the private members? You

profess to have equal authority over them in your law-making power; and why not in your sovereign prerogative to act without law?

If you resolve still to be inattentive to our arguments, and to our rights, have some regard, I beseech you, to your own standing in society. Will your daring efforts to abridge the freedom of thought and discussion, pass unnoticed in this land of justice and independence, which reflects the light of civil and religious liberty over both hemispheres? Will the free-born sons of America, whose fathers had such struggles to cast off the yoke of European despotism, be silent and respectful spectators of your ecclesiastical march after absolute dominion? Will not Methodists every where, open their eyes, and see that the efforts of reformers have not been made without a cause? Think you, that, with trembling steps, they will begin to gather up their scattered numbers of the Mutual Rights, and commit them to the flames, lest the second edition of the Baltimore act, should involve *them* also in its penalties? Will they break up their Union Societies, and implore your royal clemency, pledging themselves no more to peruse the forbidden pages? Will the reformers belonging to the Baltimore Annual Conference tamely surrender to your high-toned injunction, and with abject meanness, go and ask you what books they may be permitted to read and circulate? As well might you expect them to bow down, and kiss the great toe of his holiness at Rome.

If you are men of reason, why spurn from you the many appeals made to this noble faculty in the Mutual Rights? If you are men of one book, the Bible, why forbid the reading of those pages, where so many sacred quotations are to be found? If you are Wesleyan Me-

thodists, why interdict a book, which contains so many respectful appeals to Mr. Wesley's authority, and so many quotations from his works?

A respectable number of you were zealous reformers four or five years ago. Have you taken a retrograde motion, or become lukewarm in the cause? If so; how is this fact to be accounted for? Has it arisen from a dread of novelties, and a sanguine confidence that nothing is true but "the old Gospel which we have had from the beginning?" That nothing is true which contradicts the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is very readily admitted, and it would be well for the christian world, if it were more generally admitted than it is. But I beseech you to reflect, that many of the warm advocates for *old* things, with all their fondness for antiquity, do not look so far back as to the days of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles. Many things have been invented since that time, which have now become old; and these are the things which excite the greatest outcry against novelty, and for which the most zealous efforts are made, to magnify the argument of antiquity; because it is well known, if this should be torn from them, they would have no other argument to rest upon. Because the Gospel is old, must we therefore support all the old absurdities of popery? The mere argument of antiquity proves this, or it proves *nothing*. We believe the Gospel, not because it is old, for it was as true eighteen hundred years ago, as it is now; and will not be any *more* true, after the lapse of ten thousand years to come. And as to Church government, if you insist on antiquity, we join in with you immediately, and invite you back to the apostolic age. Is not this old enough



for you? Or will you make your official conduct demonstrate, that you think it quite too old?

You are ready to say, perhaps, that one thing will open the way for another, that for another, and if these reformers can have their will, we know not where they will find a stopping place. If you see them going beyond the oracles of God, and beyond the apostolic age, then I will join you with all my heart, in endeavouring to stop them. The Church of Rome, in her Church government, went beyond the oracles of God, to borrow pagan rites, and beyond the apostolic age, to borrow many of the pompous and obsolete ceremonies of the Jews: had she regarded, and been governed by divine authority, in all her discipline, what superstition and bloodshed would have been prevented through the following ages! You have no fears, have you, that Methodist reformers will wander as far out of the way as she did? Allow us the stopping place just mentioned, and we will never ask you to go beyond it. Nor do we wish to urge a rapid motion, in our return to primitive usage and simplicity. We only request you to take a step at a time; but in the mean time, we wish to be looking forward, and clearing the way for future movements, when the proper season shall arrive.

Remember, brethren, the interest you felt in the cause of reform, in 1823—4. Where was then, *your* stopping place? Was it the election of presiding elders? The election of a stationing committee? or both? Now, both these points of reform evidently contemplated an enlargement of general liberty, and an abridgment of episcopal power: and if we now request that the representative principle should properly run through the whole connexion, what is this but maintaining that *consistency*

and *impartiality* in our claims, which truth and righteousness require? Will our old reforming brethren in the travelling ministry, forsake us on this account? Or, if we plead for such abridgment and responsibility of episcopal power, as shall make it correspond with the executive power of the United States, will the free-born sons of America find fault with us for this? Will they go back, and support episcopal sovereignty in all its extent, giving up the presiding elder question, and every other question of reform, merely because we want Methodist bishops put upon a level with the dignified ruler who presides at the head of the nation? Is it possible that this will frighten away any of the reformers belonging to the Baltimore Annual Conference? Will they now give up their own rights and privileges, rather than see local preachers and lay members have the enjoyment of theirs? To keep down the laity and locality, are they now willing to surrender their own claims, yield a passive obedience to their masters, and do all that in them lies, to perpetuate an absolute hierarchy, to the end of the world? We hope better things of Baltimore reformers. Too many in that conference, we know, are not reformers; too many are violently opposed to reform; from them we hope but little.

But brethren, who are in any degree favourable to reform, would do well to consider, that, however desirable they may be, to take a neutral stand, or pursue a middle course, the time appears approaching when our rulers will not suffer them to do either. They may pass along for a year or two; but an inquiry will probably be commenced before long, on the conference floor, to ascertain who has been guilty of reading the Mutual Rights; or, who has been guilty of conversing with

others in favour of reform. Every thing of the kind will be considered "inveighing against our discipline." Our bishops, presiding elders, and their admirers, will be likely to insist, that every man must come out, and let the conference know where he stands. It appears to be high time, therefore, for every man to examine Church history, search his Bible, read the Mutual Rights, consult his conscience, exercise his understanding, and deliberately make up his mind, concerning the course he is to take, through the portentous and eventful scenes which are before us.

Some of the brethren will probably reply, the eventful scenes referred to, are the very things which stagger us. We were reformers, until we saw there was danger that the Church would be torn to pieces; and now we are afraid to persevere. Well, brethren, you are perfectly right in resolving not to do any thing that would injure the Church. This resolution, it is to be hoped, will be abundantly confirmed, in the mind of every one of you. And what, think you, will injure the Church? Will reason or revelation do it? Will the Church be injured, by her members searching for the truth, or by assisting each other in the diligent communication of it, through every lawful medium? Pause and think. Will the Church be injured by an increase of light on the principles of government? Will *truth, justice, equal rights, and equal liberty*, ever do her any harm? Will it tear the Church in pieces, to ask a Methodist bishop to yield the least tittle of his power? Or to ask "the itinerancy" to do unto others, as they would have others do unto them? And who intends to divide the Church? Will reformers do it, by voluntarily separating? Or will it be done by the episcopacy, through the sovereign

power of expulsion? Time will answer these questions. Can the Baltimore Annual Conference find no other way to avoid injuring and destroying the Church, but the old way of absolute power maintaining *silence*,—forbidding to *read, think, judge, or converse* on the subject of Church government? And pray, then, where did this conference receive her education? Where did she learn such a lesson? You will have to look across the great water, to the southern regions of Europe, for an answer to this question.

But why do I write this address, to be published in the Mutual Rights, after that publication has been proscribed by the very persons to whom the appeal is made? Some of them may feel indignant at it, and may be disposed to ask: "What emboldeneth thee, that thou answerest?" I answer, because if you will not read in order to inform your minds of what is going on in the earth, it is probable some of your children will. If you are too wise, either to yield to our arguments, or to answer them; your posterity will be able to judge, whether our arguments were too weak to *need* an answer, or too strong to *admit* of one. They will discover, whether your declining cause had no *occasion* to defend itself, or that you had no *ability* to give an answer which would bear the public scrutiny.

BARTIMEUS.

May, 1827.

---

To prevent similar violent proceedings in any of the other Annual Conferences, the Baltimore Union Society, published a brief notice of Mr. Dorsey's case, which we here insert.

*Proceedings of the Baltimore Union Society, in relation to the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey's case.*

At a meeting of the Baltimore Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held on the 15th day of May, 1827, it was deemed proper to lay before the public the following brief narrative of facts relative to the case of the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey.

On Wednesday the 18th of April, the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey "was charged before the Baltimore Annual Conference, with having been actively engaged in the circulation of an improper periodical work." A confidential letter from Mr. Dorsey to a friend, recommending to his attention the Mutual Rights, as an important work on Church government, was produced in evidence, and read in the conference. Mr. Dorsey acknowledged the letter to be his; but did not consider that he had violated any law by recommending the above work. After Mr. Dorsey had retired, the following resolution was offered by the Rev. Stephen G. Roszel, and adopted by the conference; "Resolved, that Dennis B. Dorsey's character pass, upon his being admonished by the president; and promising the conference that he will desist from taking any agency in spreading or supporting any publications in opposition to our discipline or government."

On the following day the admonition was given in due form, from the chair; but Mr. Dorsey could not be induced to make the promise required by the resolution. He objected to it as unreasonable and unjust—there being no law in the discipline, prohibiting any preacher from recommending or circulating such works as the Mutual Rights. He stated that he was willing to

promise the conference to be submissive to the discipline and government of the Church; and to recommend like obedience to others, until by the legislative authority of the Church, some modification of the government could be effected. A promise embracing more than this, he informed them he *could not* make.

On Friday the case was again resumed, and Mr. Dorsey was pressed to make the promise required by the resolution, which he still declined, urging as before, the injustice of the requirement. Upon which, the Rev. Stephen G. Roszel made the following motion: "Moved, that the character of brother Dorsey pass, upon his being reprov'd by the president for his contumacy in resisting the authority of the conference." This motion, however, did not prevail. After considerable desultory conversation on the case, the following resolution was offered by the Rev. Job Guest, and adopted by the conference: "Moved and seconded, that the bishops be and hereby are requested not to give Dennis B. Dorsey an appointment for the present year; and that his name be so returned on the minutes, with the reasons assigned why he has not an appointment, viz: his contumacy in regard to the authority of the conference." On Saturday, the *latter* part of this motion was so far rescinded as to omit the publication of it on the printed minutes of the conference, but to retain it on the journal.

Thus was brother Dorsey, a presbyter in the Methodist Episcopal Church, without any charge against his moral or religious character, left by the order of the conference, without a prospect of support for himself and family; and that too, with a constitution seriously injured in the service of the Church.

Now as it is the undoubted right of every man, to express his opinion of the *official conduct* of his ecclesiastical as well as his civil rulers; and whereas we deem the proceedings against Mr. Dorsey as intended to prevent the diffusion of light on a subject of vital importance to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the community at large;

Therefore: *Resolved*, 1st. That the conduct of the late Baltimore Annual Conference in the case of the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, was oppressive in its character, and not warranted by the Scriptures, nor the discipline of the Church.

*Resolved*, 2dly. That in the opinion of this Society, the conference in thus oppressing Mr. Dorsey, has evinced a determination, not only to withhold representation from the membership and local ministry, but also to keep them in ignorance of the true principles of Church government.

*Resolved*, 3dly. That this Society duly appreciate the firm and dignified stand taken by Mr. Dorsey in the conference, in favour of the principles of religious freedom, and tender to him their most affectionate regards.

*Resolved*, 4thly. That this Society deem it but just to say, that several members of the conference, together with bishop Roberts, manifested a liberal spirit on the occasion.

*Resolved*, 5thly. That the above narrative and resolutions be published.

JOHN CHAPPELL, Sen., *President*.

---

The persecution of Mr. Dorsey, and the infliction of so severe a penalty on a man in such feeble health, excited the indignation and called forth the sympathy of



reformers in every part of the country. Letters of condolence with pecuniary aid were sent to him from individuals and societies in different parts of the United States.

We have space for only one of these letters. We select that of Rev. Cornelius Springer, a travelling preacher in the West.

*Dear Sir,*—I read, last evening, the May number of the Mutual Rights, which gives an account of the disgraceful treatment of the Baltimore Annual Conference towards you. And although you are to me a total stranger, yet the perusal of your case, produced in my bosom the strongest sensations of sympathy. I could not, my dear brother, suppress the falling tear. One particular reason, I suppose, why my sympathies are so great towards you is, that I have been made to pass, in substance, through the same fiery trials through which you are now passing; and of course know how to feel for you. I was the first person, who in the Ohio Annual Conference, publicly declared in favour of reform, for which I have been made to feel the displeasure of the administration. To sum up all in a few words; I have, as it appears to me, been treated in an ungenerous manner. This treatment had for a time, the effect to destroy my happiness and to injure my health. But through the dispensation of a kind providence, I have weathered the storm. I now possess as much private felicity as I ever did in my life. Thanks to my Creator and Preserver, I have been blessed and prospered in every respect, far beyond my most sanguine expectations. This I say, not by way of boasting, but by way of encouragement, to stimulate you to bear up under your honourable degradation.

If the administration have now determined on the work of desolation, and we have often been threatened with it, I will anticipate their interrogatories by telling them that I patronize the Mutual Rights. I respect its editors, and approve of the design of their work, and believe they are doing the Church and the world a great service. And the reformers, as far as I am acquainted with them, I believe to be honest men; and many of them men of the first moral, religious, intellectual, and independent worth.

The course I have pursued in relation to this controversy, I honestly and conscientiously think is right, consequently, shall continue to pursue it until I am otherwise convinced. And after I do what I think is *right*, the administration, can do in relation to me, what *they* think is *right*. As it regards consequences, I have long been indifferent; although I would not unnecessarily provoke persecution, yet I would not swerve an inch from the course of a manly independence, to prevent the worst that might ensue.

I am, dear brother, yours in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

C. SPRINGER.

*Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey.*

OHIO, May 24, 1827.

## CHAPTER IX.

MEASURES TAKEN TO SECURE THE EXPULSION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BALTIMORE UNION SOCIETY.—SHAM TRIALS.—EXAMINATION OF MR. WESLEY'S RULE AGAINST SPEAKING EVIL OF MINISTERS.

THE part which the Baltimore Union Society took in making public through the Mutual Rights, the facts in Mr. Dorsey's case; and the expression of their opinion on the conduct of the Baltimore Annual Conference, brought down upon them the displeasure of its ministers.

The Rev. James M. Hanson and Beverly Waugh, preachers in charge of the City and Point Stations, immediately excluded fourteen local preachers, who were Reformers, residing in Baltimore, from all the Methodist pulpits in this city. Several of the proscribed and persecuted brethren were formerly travelling preachers: most of them had been preachers from fifteen to thirty years; and all of them had contributed to the support of the itinerant ministry, and towards the building of those very houses of worship in which they were now considered unworthy to officiate. The private members were also made to feel the displeasure of men in power, in various ways. A brother, Mr. John Gephart, whose religious character stood fair, and who was recommended by his leader as a suitable person to be admitted into full membership in the Methodist Church, was rejected by Mr. Hanson *because he was a member of the Baltimore Union Society*. It was now very evident from these facts, and from the threats thrown out by anti-reformers, that a storm of persecution was gathering over the heads of

the members of the Union Society. They were however, not dismayed, but calmly awaited the crisis, trusting in the protection of Almighty God, and resting their cause on the sure foundation of truth and righteousness.

Measures were now taken to expel the principal members of the Baltimore Union Society, in consequence of their having exposed the unjustifiable conduct of the Annual Conference. A secret meeting of anti-reformers was convened in July, at a school room in this City; several travelling preachers were present and a *plan* was adopted to effect the expulsion of the proscribed members. A committee of seven anti-reformers were appointed, who with the assistance of the preacher in charge, Rev. James M. Hanson, were to secure this most desirable object. The writer had an interview with the principal member of the committee, a day or two after their appointment, and requested some information relative to their instructions. He replied, "I will give you the information you desire, very cheerfully, and in a few words. You and your friends are members of the Union Society, and say you will not leave it. You publish the Mutual Rights, and say, you will not discontinue that publication. You also say, you will not *withdraw* from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Now we are reduced to one of two alternatives; either to let you remain members of the Church, and let you go on peaceably publishing the Mutual Rights, by which you agitate the Church: or to expel you. We have come to the *determination* to take the *latter* alternative and **EXPEL** you. It is, therefore, made the duty of our committee to examine the Mutual Rights, and if we find any thing in that work which is a violation of the discipline, we are authorized to bring charges and have you expelled."

Here was a frank avowal of the intentions of the anti-reformers. 1. They had *determined* to expel the leading Reformers in Baltimore, because they were members of the Union Society. 2. Because they would *continue* to *investigate* the principles of Church government. 3. Because they *would not withdraw* from the Church. 4. That some *pretext* was to be sought by which to justify their excommunication. 5. The Mutual Rights were to be "*examined*" in order to find some real or *pretended* accusation by which these *holy men of God* might effect the expulsion of their brethren and fathers.

Whilst the prosecuting committee were engaged in examining the Mutual Rights, and preparing charges, another part of the *plan* was developed. A meeting of all the male members belonging to the two stations, exclusive of reformers, was called on the 7th of August, in the little old Baptist meeting house in Pitt street. At that meeting a resolution was passed *approving* of the conduct of the conference in Mr. Dorsey's case; and an "*address*" which had been previously prepared, by a deserter from the ranks of reform, was read, and ordered to be published, in which the members of the Union Society, and other reformers, were denounced as "enemies to Methodism," &c. One of them in particular, was named, and assailed in the most intemperate, unchristian and abusive language. The conduct of the preachers in charge, who had excluded the fourteen preachers from the pulpits, was also approved and sanctioned by the meeting. The obvious, and immediate design of this meeting, was, to prepare the people to witness the *excommunication* of their friends and relatives, without those feelings of abhorrence and indignation which such flagrant acts of injustice and cruelty

were calculated to inspire in the bosom of every pious man and woman in the city.

By the first of September, Mr. Hanson was ready with his *select* committees of trial; one, to suspend the preachers; and the other to condemn the laymen. There were nine persons on the two committees, three preachers and six laymen, all of whom had assisted to *appoint* the members of the prosecuting committee, at the meeting held in the school room; and had *prejudged* and *condemned* the members of the Union Society, at the meeting held in the little Baptist Church, above referred to, on the 7th of August. Some of them had publicly declared, that "if they had the power, they would *expel* every member of the Union Society from the Church." Yet, these men were selected by Mr. Hanson, to act as jurors to condemn, that he might *expel* the members of the Union Society; and were retained by him on the trials, notwithstanding they were repeatedly objected to on these very accounts.

The following note was sent to each of the accused, by the preacher in charge. The copy is made from that sent to Dr. Jennings.

Baltimore, September 8th, 1827.

Rev. Sir,—You are hereby informed, that charges have been preferred against you, by the following persons, J. Rogers, S. Hardin, J. Berry, I. N. Toy, A. Yearly, G. Earnest and F. Israel. As it is desirable for the satisfaction of all who feel an interest in the matter, that a hearing should be had as soon as practicable, it is hoped that Tuesday evening next, 7 o'clock, will suit your convenience.

Yours resp'y, JAMES M. HANSON.

Rev. Dr. S. K. Jennings.

To the above Dr. Jennings replied. The following is an extract from his letter.

I have also to say to you, that the nature of my defence, will make it imperiously necessary for me, to correspond with the several writers, for the publication of whose papers, as one of the editors of a periodical work, I am called to give an account. This circumstance, together with other, and very important parts of my intended defence, will necessarily require a good deal of time. A proper sense of justice on the part of the executive, therefore, will certainly protect me against the violence of being urged to too hasty a hearing. I am, &c.

S. K. JENNINGS.

*Rev. J. M. Hanson.*

To this Mr. Hanson replied. The following is an extract from his letter.

I am no less astonished, that you should think it all-important to your intended defence, to have a correspondence with the writers of those pieces which the brethren above alluded to have designated. The sentiments and expressions which are deemed exceptionable, have been published to the world, and speak for themselves. With the writers for the "Mutual Rights," scattered as they are over the continent, the charges in question have no immediate concern: nor is it easy to see how these writers are to render you any assistance. They can furnish no testimony,—they can undo nothing that you, as a member of the editorial committee may have done; and without designing to flatter, I may be permitted to say, they can place the subject in question, in no light, in which it has not appeared to your own mind; seeing that it has been with you a subject of close and deep deliberation for several years.



Under these impressions, and desirous, for the good of all concerned, to bring the matter to as speedy an issue as is consistent with a proper sense of justice, it is deemed altogether unadvisable to fix upon any period for investigation, beyond Monday 17th, at 7 o'clock, P. M.

I am, &c.

JAS. M. HANSON.

*Rev. Dr. Samuel K. Jennings.*

P. S. Should you prefer any evening prior to the time above mentioned, be good enough to let us know.

J. M. H.

All things being ready, the prosecuting committee visited five or six members of the Union Society, and inquired of them whether they would abandon the Union Society and discontinue the Mutual Rights. But the persons visited did not see fit to comply with this *modest* request, which they knew those men had no right to make; and which, in fact, was an insult offered to them as free citizens of these United States, and as members of the Church of Christ.

On the 17th September, 1827, the sham trials commenced, at the old conference room, Rev. J. M. Hanson in the chair, Rev. Samuel Williams, John W. Harris and Thomas Basford, committee, to try the preachers.

Mr. F. Israel, on the part of the prosecution stated as follows:

"I have nothing personal against Dr. Jennings, I have the highest regard and personal esteem for him. I regret that this course was unavoidable. We had no other alternative. We were driven to this course. We have been told by the members of the Union Society that they must have lay delegation. They also say they never will withdraw from the Church. Lay delegation we believe is not practicable, or expedient. With these views, we never

can agree; we are as distant as the poles. The Mutual Rights have produced wranglings, disputations and division. Are there not two parties? Every religious community has a right to form its own discipline, and its members are not at liberty to disturb it. While they remain members of the Church, they have no right to form, and be members of, the Union Society. We claim what we conceive to be a right of ours, and we ought to be left in the peaceable enjoyment of our rights.

The rules which we think have been violated, are to be found on pages 78 and 91, of the discipline, as designated in the charges and specifications, upon which this trial is founded: and we refer to the Mutual Rights in extenso in proof of the charges—but more particularly to the references which are appended to the specifications.”\*

It will be proper in this place to make some brief remarks on Mr. Israel's introduction of the charges and specifications.

The introduction of the charges by Mr. Israel is in strict accordance with his declarations to the writer of this history at page 167. He “had nothing personal against Dr. Jennings”—“had the highest regard and personal esteem for him.” His offence lay in being an advocate, in common with the other members of the Union Society, of lay delegation, which, in Mr. Israel's opinion, “is neither practicable nor expedient.”

\*In the course of some interlocutory remarks, it was admitted by the brethren in the prosecution, that they were selected by the meeting at Dr. Roszel's school room, to examine the discipline, and to determine whether the members of the Union Society had violated it. But were left to their own discretion to prefer charges. They laboured to have it understood that they acted upon their own individual responsibility; that they pursued their own course, and came to their own conclusion.

Here then we have, on the part of the prosecuting committee, a full and prompt disavowal of all immorality attaching to Dr. Jennings. The same disavowal of personal criminality, was subsequently made by different members of the prosecuting committee in regard to other members of the Union Society. Several of these were among the most inoffensive and pious members of the Church. Mr. Israel's own father, an aged and highly respectable member of the Church, was also among them. He also was guilty of the enormous crimes of being a member of the Union Society, a reader of the Mutual Rights, and an advocate for a lay delegation; and had lived long enough to see his own son, exhibit him to the Church and the world, as unfit for membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Another statement in the introduction merits attention: "Every religious community has a right to form its own discipline, and its members are not at liberty to disturb it." The first clause of this sentence is exactly what reformers have all along contended for. But when and where did the Methodist community form its own discipline? Is it not known to all, that the itinerant preachers without consulting the community or membership, formed the discipline, with all its assumptions and obnoxious features? It was truly wonderful to hear those men talk thus, when they must have known, that this is one of the things they deny. They have over and over again said, the Methodist community "have no right" personally nor by their representatives, to form their own discipline. In the same sentence, however, Mr. Israel denies the thing he asserts in the first clause; "the members are not at liberty to disturb it." They who have a right to form the discipline have no right to

mend it! no, nor even to propose amendments; for this, by the way, was all the reformers did. They did not attempt to mend the discipline, but simply proposed amendments. This was their *great offence*, for by doing this they produced a difference of opinion from that entertained by Mr. Israel and his friends. This he called "wranglings, disputations and divisions."

The last assertion made by this leader of the prosecution equally surprised us; "While they remain members of the Church they have no right to form, and be members of the Union Society." Here we ask; where does the discipline of the M. E. Church forbid the members to form Union Societies? But to proceed to the charges and specifications.

#### CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS.

The Rev. Doctor Samuel K. Jennings is charged with endeavouring to sow dissensions in the society or Church, in this station or city, known by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and with the violation of that general rule of the discipline of the said Church or society, which prohibits its members from doing harm, and requires them to avoid evil of every kind; and especially with violating that clause of said General Rule, which prohibits speaking evil of ministers.

*Specification 1st.* Because the said Samuel K. Jennings, while a member and a local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, aforesaid, did heretofore attach himself to, and become a member of the society called the Union Society of the city of Baltimore; which Union Society is in opposition to the Discipline, in whole or in part, of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid.

*Specification 2d.* Because the said Samuel K. Jennings, as a member of the said Union Society, directly, or indirectly, either by pecuniary contributions or his personal influence, aiding, abetting, co-operating, or assisting in the publication and circulation of a work called "The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," printed under the direction of an editorial committee, (of which the said S. K. Jennings is, or lately was one,) appointed by, or who are members of the Union Society aforesaid, which work or publication, called "The Mutual Rights of the

ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church" contains (among other things) much that inveighs against the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, in whole or in part, and is in direct opposition thereto; and that it is abusive or speaks evil of a part if not of most of the ministers of that Church. The general tendency of which work or publication, has been to produce disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union among the members of said Church in this city or station.

*Specification 3d.* Because the said Samuel K. Jennings, as a member of the Union Society aforesaid, did advise, request, or recommend, the publication of a pamphlet entitled "The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," written by the Rev. Alexander M'Cain, in which various declarations and assertions are made without proper proof or just foundation, calculated to disgrace and bring reproach upon the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, its ministers and members, and which declarations and assertions are well calculated to produce, increase, and heighten the disagreeement, strife, contention, and breach of union alluded to in the 2d specification.

For proof of which, the publication entitled the Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church is referred to, and particularly,

No. 1, page 31, Constitution of the Union Society of Baltimore.

" 7, " 261, Essays on Church Property, No. 1 & 2, by Rev. N. Snethen.

" 25, " 26, Joseph Walker's Letter, Alabama.

" 27, " 53, Luther on Representation.

" 29, " 100, Timothy's Address to Junior Bishop.

" 30, " 147, Dissenter.

" 32, " 199, Rev. A. Shinn's Appeal.

" 33, " 214, Granville Union Society.

" 34, " 270, Vindex.

Sovereignty of Methodism in the South.

248, Address of N. Snethen.

" 35, " 277, Union Society on D. B. Dorsey's Case.

" 36, " 301, Address.

300, Neale.

322, Centreville Proceedings.

And, also, the said pamphlet, entitled The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy, with such other documentary or oral proof as the undersigned may deem expedient to exhibit or produce.

Signed, *George Earnest, Jacob Rogers, Samuel Harden, Isaac N. Toy, Alexander Yearly, Fielder Israel, and John Berry.*

Baltimore, September 7th, 1827.

We propose first to examine the two rules of discipline said to have been violated by the members of the Union Society.

The rule on page 78 of the discipline is found in Messrs. John and Charles Wesley's General Rules, framed in 1743, for the government of their societies. It is a part of the first branch of the rules which require those who desire to continue in those societies "to avoid evil of every kind, especially, that which is most generally practised;" such as swearing, Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, fighting, quarrelling, smuggling, usury, or taking illegal interest, and "*uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; speaking evil of magistrates or ministers.*" This last sentence, printed in italics, constitutes the rule said to have been violated by those of us who edited the Mutual Rights, and those who were members of the Baltimore Union Society.

We are confidently assured by a pious, aged member of the Methodist Protestant Church, who was a Methodist in England more than sixty years ago, that by "*ministers*" in the above rule, the Wesleys meant the *civil ministers of the crown*, and not the ministers of religion, and that it was so understood by all the society. That it was a common practice among Methodist politicians opposed to the measures of government, to express themselves freely in relation to the conduct of cabinet ministers. This practice was viewed by the Wesleys, who were decided adherents to the government, as *uncharitable* or at least, *unprofitable* conversation. Hence they introduced the rule in view of putting a final stop to those political discussions in their societies. The import was; if a member of our society will converse on governmental subjects, in opposition to the

measures of ministers, and censure their conduct, "We will admonish him of the error of his way; we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us."

That this was the true sense and proper application of the rule; and that it could have no other, is fairly sustained by the following facts.

1. At the time of its formation, with the exception of the two Wesleys and a few clergymen, there were no ministers in the societies against whom uncharitable or unprofitable conversation could be indulged: and the handfuls of persons united in the societies, at that period, were so much attached to the Wesleys, and so zealous of their reputation, that there could have been no occasion for a rule to prevent the speaking evil of them or their colleagues in the ministry.

2. The rule could not have been made for the protection of the English clergy, because such a supposition would have involved the Wesleys in a violation of their own rule.

Mr. John Wesley called the clergy "blind leaders of the blind." As his societies increased, he was desirous to procure some other assistance for them in addition to himself and his associates. It seems he at first had hopes that the ministers of the respective parishes would watch over those who were lately turned from the error of their ways. In this, however, he was disappointed; and says, in his defence of himself, which he makes in the third part of his Farther Appeal to men of reason and religion: "And how did they (the parochial ministers) watch over the sinners lately reformed? Even as a leopard watches over his prey. They drove some of them also from the Lord's table; to which, till now,



they had no desire to approach. They preached all manner of evil concerning them; openly cursing them in the name of the Lord. They turned many out of their work; persuading others to do so too, and harassed them all manner of ways. The event was, that some were wearied out, and so turned back to their vomit again. And then those *good pastors* gloried over them, and endeavoured to shake others by their example."

Mr. Charles Wesley, in one of his manuscript hymns, treating on our Lord's declaration, Matt. 21. 13. "It is written my house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves," turns the expression against the bishops and ministers of the Church, and writes: But ye have made my house a den of Reverend and Right Reverend thieves.

It cannot for a moment be admitted, that men who wrote thus concerning the clergy, ever designed their rule to apply to church ministers in view of screening them from censure. The construction, therefore, furnished by our aged brother, unquestionably gives the only legitimate sense of the rule: namely, that by "ministers" the Wesleys meant cabinet ministers, and not the ministers of the gospel, nor the few clergymen associated with themselves.

The societies who first organized in Frederick County, State of Maryland, and in New York, adopted the General Rules, and, of course, the clause against speaking evil of ministers. But with them the rule had an intelligible application; for Robert Strawbridge, Philip Embury, and Capt. Webb, were British subjects, and the societies were composed of provincials, under the government of the crown ministers. And so of the

members of the first conference held in Philadelphia in 1773. The six preachers who composed it were all Englishmen and under the British government, as we have shown in a preceding part of this work. But after the Provinces had achieved their independence, the rule became a dead letter, and ought to have been expunged as totally inapplicable to Methodists in this country; or if permitted to remain in the General Rules it should have been viewed as Methodists view it, obsolete, and not suited to their condition as American Methodists; or, if it was deemed wholesome and necessary, it should have been revised and made intelligibly applicable to Methodist preachers or gospel ministers of any denomination. But it was permitted to sleep for years; and, without any action of subsequent General Conferences, a new sense and new application were given to it as might suit the fancy and purposes of preachers in charge of stations and circuits.

The construction now given to the rule by Methodist preachers was unknown to Mr. Wesley, and the penalty is a hundred fold heavier than that attached by the father of the rule. For his penalty amounted only to expulsion from a society, but *this*, to *excommunication* from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

According to the wording of the rule, even in its new application, to speak evil of a minister, is to speak "*uncharitably*" of him. To misrepresent his motives or conduct would, therefore, be speaking evil of him. It is presumed no one will say, that to speak the truth of a minister—to represent his conduct fairly—and to point out plainly the effects of his measures, will amount to speaking evil of him.

The accused brethren, denied that they had spoken or published anything false against any minister, or had intentionally misrepresented the conduct of any one; and, demanded the specific words and sentences, which had been construed into evil speaking, but the accusers of the brethren refused to point out a single sentence. The writer of this history had written and published much, but had uniformly avoided to arraign motives or misrepresent conduct. He always spoke respectfully of Mr. Asbury, and viewed him as a great and good man, but rigidly and injuriously attached to Mr. Wesley's absolute system of government. But suppose he had said: "Mr. Asbury had too much power: that more authority was vested in him than was consistent with the safety and security of the rights and privileges of the ministry and membership of the Church of Christ; that had he been so disposed, with the authority and power he possessed, he could have oppressed his brethren, driven them from the work, or, have imposed on them burdens and hardships, incompatible with the genuine principles of christian liberty, and the rights of man." And "that he was *too fond of power, and too tenacious of maintaining his authority*, and of supporting his power." Would this have been viewed as evil speaking? If the assertions were false, it would be evil speaking of the worst sort; but if true, there is no evil speaking in the case. Let the testimony of a man be heard, who says,—“Mr. Asbury's name and manner of life, should be recorded on vellum, and engraven on marble.” This brother was intimately acquainted with him and his movements from 1784 till his death in 1816. Speaking of the above quoted passages, in his funeral sermon on Asbury, he says: “As to those objections,

this is neither the time, nor the place to repel, rebut, defend or controvert them. However, it may be proper, in this part of the subject, to bring them into view; and, by way of accommodation, I have no difficulty in admitting, *honestly and candidly*, that the objections, when considered, on general principles, *are too well founded.*" Rev. Ezekiel Cooper's funeral discourse, page 124.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### EXAMINATION OF THE GAG LAW.—REMARKS ON THE SPECIFICATIONS.—GROUNDS OF PROTEST BY THE CONDEMNED MINISTERS AND MEMBERS.

IN the list of essays and passages cited by the prosecution, there may be found some pungent expressions that at first sight will appear unjustifiably severe, but upon close examination, each and all of them may be borne out by truth and facts. And we are happy to say, that this work has been performed by Dr. S. K. Jennings in his "Exposition of the late controversy in the Methodist Episcopal Church—and Review of the Methodist Magazine and Quarterly on petitions and memorials," to which we beg leave to refer the reader, for a full and triumphant defence of the writers, and refutation of the charge of evil speaking brought against a small part of the members of the Union Society.

The second rule cited by the prosecution reads: "If a member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavouring to sow dissensions in any of our societies,

by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending, shall be first reprov'd by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the Church." Page 93 Discipline, edition of 1843.

The palpable and obvious meaning of this rule is: If a member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of pointing out any errors in our doctrines, or defects in our discipline, with design to produce dissensions or difference of opinion among the members of our societies, such person so offending, shall be first reprov'd by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and if he persist in such practices, he shall be expelled from the Church.

The circumstances under which this rule was enacted, prove this to be the true design, namely, to prevent all discussion on the character of the discipline, or doctrines. At the time of its introduction by the conference, the preachers and societies were greatly agitated by the discussion of Mr. O'Kelly's appeal question. In consequence of their defeat, in the conference of 1792, he and Mr. McKendree, and others, withdrew from the connexion, and made the cause of their withdrawal known to the people. To prevent, therefore, the spread of this discussion, the conference framed and put in force the rule, which has been most appropriately termed "the Methodist gag-law." The rule was evidently intended to *suppress* the freedom of speech, and silence all further inveighings or censurings against the great power secured to Mr. Asbury by the conference of 1792.

A similar rule was passed by the British Conference in 1795, when the first plan of pacification was pub-

lished. It also, was the creature of circumstances; and, like its American brother, aimed a deadly blow at the freedom of speech and of the press. It enacts, "that if any local preacher, trustee, steward or leader, shall disturb the peace of the society, by *speaking* for or *against* the introduction of the Lord's Supper, or concerning the old or new plan so called; the superintendent of the circuit, or the majority of the trustees, stewards and leaders of the society, so disturbed, shall have authority to summon a meeting of the travelling preachers of the circuit, trustees, stewards and leaders of the society; evidence shall be examined on both sides, and if the charge be proven, the superintendent preacher *shall expel from the society* the person so offending." Minutes of British Conference, vol. 1, p. 322.

The following year another gag-law was published. "No preacher shall publish *any thing* but what is given to the conference, and printed in our own press. The Book Committee to determine what is proper to be printed."

Nothing, therefore, can be clearer to the understanding of the impartial reader, than, that all those rules, American and English, were designed to prevent investigation, to silence discussion, and produce tame, passive obedience to the unlimited authority of Methodist preachers.

We are aware that a different construction has been admitted, and that the rule has for its object merely the prevention of "unchristian railing and violence." This is obviously a forced construction, unsustained by the plain wording of the rule, and contradicted by all the circumstances which induced its enactment. Neither Mr. O'Kelly nor Mr. McKendree was guilty of unchris-

tian railing and violence. Mr. McKendree expressed himself strongly in opposition to Mr. Asbury's power, but he was not guilty of unchristian railing and violence.

We are also aware, that the General Conference of 1828 disavowed the charge of wishing to suppress free inquiry, or to forbid the liberty of speech and of the press. But if the liberty of speech and of the press be allowed to our ministers and members, "equally with any other citizens of the United States;" a late writer asks; how is it that ministers and members have been expelled for not giving up the Mutual Rights? Merely because the work is a periodical? Surely citizens of the United States have as much right to issue a periodical publication, as to enjoy the liberty of the press, in any other way whatever. And why did the General Conference propose, "that no other *periodical* publication be devoted to the same controversy." If the gag-law "never was intended to suppress freedom of inquiry, or to deny the liberty of speech and of the press," but merely to prevent "unchristian railing and violence," why then did not the General Conference so amend the rule as to make it bear explicitly on this kind of conduct. The truth is, the rule is suffered to remain in its present form, to enable the itinerant ministers to "defecate the Church" of men who have the moral courage to assert their christian rights, and publish their opinions of the rules of the Methodist discipline.

The accused ministers did not deny, that they had publicly and in print, pointed out the great defects of the discipline, its gross assumptions, and dangerous tendencies; and freely admitted, that their design in so doing was to produce a dissent or difference of opinion from those who held the discipline to be immaculate.



And asserted their right from Gospel grant to "try all things," and their civil right to the freedom of speech and of the press, guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, and the State of Maryland. But denied all intention to produce separations from the Church, or strife among the members; and shewed, that their design was to reform the government, and not to split the connexion.

We propose in the next place to examine the Specifications.

*Specification 1st.*—"Because the said Samuel K. Jennings, while a member and a local preacher of the Methodist E. Church aforesaid, did heretofore attach himself to and become a member of the society called the Union Society of Baltimore; which Union Society *is in opposition* to the discipline, in whole or in part, of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid."

The assumption here is, that the discipline prohibits the formation of Union Societies; and secondly, that it forbids the members and local preachers to "attach themselves to, or become members of said Union Societies." Now the fact is, the discipline no where prohibits the formation of Union Societies; nor does it forbid its members and local preachers to attach themselves to such societies. The entire specification is founded on what some call "false facts," that is on what is not true. No such prohibition being found in the discipline. The members and local preachers had, therefore, as undoubted a right to form Union Societies for the purposes contemplated, as Mr. Wesley had to form his "United Societies" within the pale of the Church of England. In fact there is *no* law, moral, ecclesiastical or civil, prohibiting these things. Therefore, to expel men for

exercising this liberty was an outrage never before perpetrated by any Protestant Church in Christendom.

The second Specification reads;

"Because the said Samuel K. Jennings, as a member of the said Union Society, directly, or indirectly, either by pecuniary contributions or his personal influence, aiding, abetting, co-operating, or assisting in the publication and circulation of a work called "The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," printed under the direction of an editorial committee, (of which the said S. K. Jennings is, or lately was one,) appointed by, or who are members of the Union Society aforesaid, which work or publication, called "The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church" contains (among other things) much that inveighs against the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, in whole or in part, and is in direct opposition thereto; and that is abusive or speaks evil of a part if not of most of the ministers of that Church. The general tendency of which work or publication, has been to produce disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union among the members of said Church in this city or station."

This is, perhaps, the most verbose and laboured piece of composition found in the English language. The writer, a drawer of deeds, mortgages, &c. unquestionably checked largely on his stock of legal technicalities in this wonderful production.

Here are two things taken for granted, neither of which is true. First, that a rule existed in the discipline forbidding the formation of Union Societies, and secondly, that a rule also existed in the same discipline forbidding the publication of any work in which any essay or paper shall ever be admitted, that shall be con-

sidered to inveigh against the discipline, or speak evil of *Gospel* ministers. No such rules are to be found in the discipline.

The third thing asserted is, that S. K. Jennings while a member of the Union Society assisted to publish a work in which certain writers have been permitted to inveigh against the discipline, and speak evil of ministers. Now mark the injustice of the prosecution, while the members of the Union Society are called to account for publications in the *Mutual Rights*, the *known* writers are permitted to pass uncharged and unmolested, and the accused are denied time to correspond with those writers in view of such explanations and defence as they could, with ease, have furnished in a few weeks at most. This proves most conclusively, that the real object of the party was, not so much to punish the "inveighers," as to suppress the *Mutual Rights* and break up the Union Society.

The third and last Specification is notoriously untrue, that Samuel K. Jennings, as a member of the Union Society, did advise, request, or recommend the publication of a pamphlet entitled "*The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy*," written by the Rev. Alexander M'Cain, &c. Mr. M'Cain published the pamphlet at his own volition, on his *own responsibility*; and he was neither advised, requested nor recommended to publish the work, by the Union Society.

The avowed and real design of instituting the periodical entitled the *Mutual Rights* of the ministers and members of the Methodist E. Church, in 1824 was, to enlighten the Methodist community on the subject of Church government and to show the great necessity of having a lay delegation in the General Conference. The

true design of organizing Union Societies was, to unite the friends of representation in organized forms, for the purpose of preventing secessions from the Church; to ascertain the number of ministers and members friendly to a representative government; and to prepare one similar memorial to the General Conference for lay representation.

The opponents to lay representation saw clearly that these measures were judicious, and would in due time induce a majority of the ministers and members to demand representation; and, consequently, the itinerant ministers would be compelled to relinquish a portion of their absolute authority. They, therefore, determined to employ all the means in their power to put down the Mutual Rights, and to break up the Union Societies. Several means were employed for this purpose, such as branding reformers with opprobrious epithets; misrepresenting their real designs, &c. But the principal means employed to effect their object was the putting in force the obsolete gag-law passed by the General Conference of 1792, against those who became members of Union Societies, or patronized the Mutual Rights.

For proof of this design we have only to look at facts which had transpired since the institution of the Mutual Rights and organization of Union Societies. The itinerant ministers commenced operations under the provisions of the gag-law in Tennessee by expelling in the fall of 1824 a number of ministers and members, not for immorality but for attempting to form a Union Society:— This outrageous act was followed up by the expulsion or excommunication of several ministers and members in North Carolina, because they had joined a Union Society:—In the spring of 1827, the Baltimore Annual Con-

ference, left the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, without an appointment for the ensuing conference year; and finally expelled him, for recommending the Mutual Rights to a friend:—In the fall of the same year the Baltimore Union Society was assailed under the sanction of the same old rule, and after a sham trial eleven ministers and twenty-two laymen were expelled.—In 1829 three ministers and fourteen laymen were expelled in Cincinnati (of which we shall give an account in its proper place) because they read the Mutual Rights, and belonged to a Union Society. Now, let it be carefully observed that in all the above cases, a distinct proposition was made to each person, that if they would cease to read or recommend the Mutual Rights, and withdraw from the Union Society, he should not be expelled. Even the General Conference of 1828, proposed to restore the expelled ministers and members on *condition* that they would abandon the Mutual Rights and institute no other periodical in its place and dissolve the Union Societies.

From a view of the above detailed facts, is it not as palpable as day light, that the *real* design of the anti-reformers was to put down the Mutual Rights and break up the Union Societies, and thus to silence all further inquiry into the nature of their government—to defeat the design of introducing a lay representation into the general conference—and to perpetuate the absolute authority which the itinerant preachers had exercised over the people from the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This being their obvious design it follows, that their declarations to the Church and the world, that reformers were not expelled for forming Union Societies and publishing the Mutual Rights, but for *immoral*-

*ity*, is an unjustifiable and cruel assertion contradicted by all the facts of the case. It was in fact and in truth, one party expelling the opposite party, by manouvre and the exertion of Church power. This is the light in which posterity will most unquestionably view the whole affair.

The fact, that there were only a few ministers and members expelled, about eighty in all, in the United States, does not invalidate our view given above, nor mitigate the criminality of those engaged in this unhal-  
lowed business of excommunicating their brethren for a difference of opinion on Church government. The gross injustice of these acts of violence produced, as we shall see presently, serious secessions from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and induced the great body of reformers to organize a separate Church fellowship, based on equitable and liberal principles.

---

The committee appointed to try the laymen, consisted of Baltzell Shaffer, Alexander Russell, John W. Berry, William McConkey, Thomas Kelso and T. Armstrong.

These men were all objected to by the brethren tried, as having identified themselves with the prosecutors, as having prejudged the brethren; and, consequently, as being incompetent to give a righteous decision. When they were asked by the accused members, whether they had formed or expressed an opinion, that the Mutual Rights was in opposition to the discipline, Mr. Hanson pronounced the question *out of order*. And when they were asked, if they had formed or expressed an opinion, that the members of the Union Society ought to be expelled, Mr. Hanson declared this question *illegal*! And when they were only asked if they had EXPRESSED such

an opinion, three of the five jurors refused to answer the question, and were still retained on the committee. Mr. Baltzell Shaffer, who was chairman of the committee of trial was actually chairman of the meeting which appointed the prosecutors!\*

The brethren protested against the whole proceedings on the following grounds.

1. Against the tribunal before which they were arraigned, as not having jurisdiction over the case. The question being one on government, in which thousands were interested, and concerned, and not a matter recognizable by a common Church tribunal.

2. Against the manner in which the tribunal was gotten up, as entirely new and unprecedented.

3. Against the prosecutors, as being guilty of *duplicity*, they having been appointed at a meeting of anti-reformers to *act as a committee*, and yet laboured to have it understood, that they acted individually and impartially, on their own responsibility.

4. Against the members of the committees selected by Mr. Hanson to try the members of the Union Society as *incompetent*, they having assisted to appoint the prosecuting committee at the school room—and having prejudged and condemned the brethren in the Pitt street “*address*.”

5. Against the judge (Mr. Hanson) as being prejudiced against the accused members.

6. Against the interference of the Church with their right to become members of the Baltimore Union So-

\*The Rev. Joshua Wells, member of the Baltimore Annual Conference, was appointed chairman of the meeting, but in consequence of his having to retire, Baltzell Shaffer was appointed chairman in his stead.



ciety, seeing that the society contemplated no violation of the laws of God, or the rules in the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

7. Against the whole proceedings as *a party* business, designed to give the party in *power* an advantage over the party not in power, by stigmatizing them as disorderly members and evil speakers.

The protests entered by the accused members and ministers, were overruled by Mr. Hanson, and the trials ordered to go on. The reformers admitted that they were members of the Union Society, and had contributed towards the support of the Mutual Rights; and contended, that they had a right to do both; but denied that they had published any thing false of any minister: that whatever personalities had appeared in the Mutual Rights, were nothing more than *personal illustrations* of the *defects* of the government and its administration, and challenged the prosecutors to point out the *particular sentences*, which they alleged to be infractions of the discipline, or violations of the rules referred to: *but the prosecutors uniformly declined pointing out any particular sentences*, and referred to whole essays, and the entire work, where *they* said, such passages *might* be found.

After this exhibit of *facts*, it is scarcely necessary to inform the reader, that the persons accused were all condemned. Ten of them were preachers, and twenty-two were laymen. The Rev. Alexander McCain was tried separately, in his absence, by a committee selected by Mr. Hanson, composed of three of *the most illiterate* local preachers, perhaps, in the State of Maryland, and suspended. The preachers carried up their cases to the District Conference, that sat on the 26th December, 1827, which was their proper court of trial. Here they

expected to have justice done them, as a majority of the conference were reformers. But on the morning of the second day, after holding a caucus the preceding evening, the presiding elder with a *minority* of the conference and the votes of nine coloured men, *who were not entitled to a vote*, DISSOLVED the District Conference, and ordered the preachers to appear at the Quarterly Conference and stand their trials. Indignant at this unexpected *act of injustice*, the preachers determined not to appear before the Quarterly Conference, but to appeal to the approaching Annual Conference against the *arbitrary* and *illegal* proceedings of the presiding elder. In the mean time the Quarterly Conference expelled them all.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

PROTEST SENT TO THE PRESIDING ELDER.—MEMORIAL TO THE BALTIMORE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.—INSTRUMENT UNDER WHICH THE EXPELLED AND THEIR FRIENDS ORGANIZED.—PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEMALE FRIENDS.—PROSPERITY OF THE ASSOCIATION.

The following protest was sent to the Presiding Elder of the Baltimore District, Rev. Joseph Frye.

We the subscribers, having been informed by your note of the 12th instant of your intention, to bring before your Quarterly Meeting Conference of the Baltimore city station, the charges and specifications heretofore alleged against us, and on which, the church authorities of this station, have already once acted and

ordered our suspension; and that you say, this will be done because the "District Conference refused to hold its regular session." We hereby inform you, that as the District Conference met, was legally organized, and for one whole day and more continued in session, according to Discipline, it was, therefore, your duty to have continued the session until the business of the conference was finished. Instead of this, you arbitrarily received a vote of the minority of the attending white members, for a dissolution of the conference, and pronounced it dissolved accordingly.

We, therefore, **PROTEST** against your right to bring the charges and specifications alleged against us, before the Quarterly Meeting Conference.

1st. Because we consider you to have acted without law or precedent; and, that the provision to which you refer, as made by the Discipline, has in view those districts *only*, in which the local preachers "shall refuse or neglect to hold the regular sessions" of their District Conference. In this case, the preachers had actually met, and commenced their regular session: moreover, a majority of the white members in attendance, were in favour of continuing the session.

2d. In thus arbitrarily compelling us to appear before the Quarterly Conference of the Baltimore city station you would subject us to the great injustice of being tried, by men, who were our prosecutors and judges in the first instance, together with those, who had virtually pledged themselves to sustain the prosecutions: first, by appointing said prosecutors at the meeting held in Roszel's school-room; and secondly, by their vote for the publication of the Pitt street Address, in which they publicly declare us to be the "enemies of Methodism."

3d. Besides, in consequence of the course that you have pursued, the tribunal, designated by the Discipline, as the place of trial for local preachers, and before which we were ready to appear, ceases to exist—and you have no authority to bring us to trial before any other; our condition is altogether novel, and not within the limits of the jurisdiction of a Quarterly Meeting Conference. Our case necessarily makes its appeal to the General Conference, since there is no other tribunal which can have a right to say what shall be done, when a presiding elder shall have pronounced a District Conference dissolved, notwithstanding a majority of those interested shall have actually met, for the purpose of holding their regular session, declaring themselves meanwhile opposed to a dissolution.

4th. The illegality and impropriety of having counted the votes of coloured men, in deciding a question of this sort, within the limits of the State of Maryland, we presume will not be questioned.

Samuel K. Jennings,  
Daniel E. Reese,  
James R. Williams,  
John C. French,  
William Kesley,

Thomas McCormick,  
Luther J. Cox,  
John S. Reese,  
John Valiant,  
Reuben T. Boyd.

*Baltimore, 16th January, 1828.*

---

A memorial was also sent up, signed by all who were expelled in Baltimore, to the Baltimore Annual Conference which assembled in Carlisle, April 1828, as follows:

The memorial of the undersigned, late ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Baltimore, and who have recently been expelled from the fellowship of said Church, respectfully sheweth,

that we believe we have been unjustly deprived of our membership, for the following considerations:

First. We consider it to have been a grievous encroachment of our rights, to require us to withdraw from the Union Society, and to demand the suppression of the Mutual Rights as the only condition on which we could avoid a Church prosecution.

Second. We consider it to have been a violation of the discipline, and an unjustifiable neglect of a well-known duty of the preacher, having the pastoral charge of the station, to have received accusations against us, and to have summoned us to trial without having previously used all his personal influence to restore and preserve peace.

Third. We consider it altogether inconsistent with any proper sense of justice that we should have been subjected to trial for publishing papers, the authors of which being members and ministers of our Church, were left unmolested; although the names of some of the writers were made public, and no demand had been made for the names of those who were not known. This consideration is greatly strengthened by the fact, that some of the papers to which exceptions were raised, had been published two or three years previous, and during all that time the characters of such of us as were official members, had been regularly passed without exception, by the Quarterly Meeting Conferences, of which our prosecutors were members.

Fourth. We consider it altogether unreasonable that the preacher in charge did not allow time to the chairman of the editorial committee to correspond with the writers of the papers complained of, before he was compelled to appear and answer; thereby subjecting

him and all of us to the necessity of entering our protest against the illegality and injustice of the procedure.

Fifth. We consider it very objectionable, that after the question upon Church government had produced so much excitement as to lead to the acknowledged formation of two parties; one party should have been permitted to enlist the Church authorities to aid them in the expulsion of the other party, which of course produced the reproachful consequence that the whole of the proceedings were inevitably conducted in an *exparte* manner.

Sixth. When cited to trial, the committee ought to have been devoid of partiality or prejudice, this we presume will not be denied, but the fact was far otherwise. The preacher in charge selected the two committees from brethren who had previously voted at a select meeting, that we were "enemies of Methodism." Moreover, when asked by the Rev. Mr. Hanson, if we had any objection to the committee, and after their own acknowledgment that they had voted as aforesaid, yet Mr. Hanson declared them fully competent, and they were retained, notwithstanding our solemn protestations against such a procedure.

Seventh. We consider it highly objectionable, that although the preacher in charge was respectfully requested in accordance with the general, if not universal practice of all courts of enlightened jurisprudence, to direct the reading of the particular words, sentences, paragraphs, or sections, which were to be relied on as proof of objectionable matter; yet Mr. Hanson in reply to the request to order the reading of such parts of the Mutual Rights as were expected to sustain the charges, declared, it could not be permitted, and the committees were permitted to retire with all their prejudices, taking

with them the Mutual Rights, in extenso, on which to form their decision, without having given an opportunity to the accused, to explain, or even to remove wrong impressions; and this consideration acquires additional strength from the fact, that the explanations of the writers themselves, which ought to have been had in the case, were also precluded, the undeniable importance of which will still more fully appear, by reference to a late paper, written by the Rev. Mr. Shinn, in reply to the Narrative and Defence, &c. and to facts which transpired in the course of the trials, &c.

Eighth. Had we been required to correct any thing that was erroneous in previous numbers of the Mutual Rights, or to apologize for any severity of expression, or to explain, or to rectify any thing that might have lead a reader into error, we hereby declare, (as was declared in some of the protests,) that we should most gladly have done so, both as matter of duty, and for the sake of our brethren; but these were not the conditions proposed to us, either by our brethren, who accused us, or by the preacher, who expelled us.

They required us to abandon the Union Society, and to suppress the Mutual Rights, the most proper medium through which the evils complained of, if they really existed, could be corrected.

Ninth. It may be asked, why did not the lay members appeal to the Quarterly Conference? To this we answer, that having protested against the legality of the whole proceeding, we deemed it improper. The impropriety of an appeal to that tribunal must have appeared with irresistible force to any, knowing as we did, that nearly all of its members had been actively engaged in



getting up the prosecution, and had united in *condemning* all of us in their Pitt street publication.

Your memorialists forbear to state numerous other facts developed in the course of the prosecutions and trials, calculated in their tendencies and issues, not only to degrade us, but to widen the differences amongst brethren; and to bring lasting, and just reproach on the co-ordinate executive branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

We, therefore, request the conference, in the name of Him whom we all profess to serve—by their attachment to the principles of righteousness and the interests of their lacerated Zion, to interpose and restore us to the enjoyment of our former standing in the Church of our choice and affections, and from which we have been unnaturally severed—thereby they will render us an act of justice, and ensure to themselves an ever during acclaim from the virtuous and the good.

Your memorialists would finally state that no malevolent affection has place in their souls, against either of the prosecutors, preachers, or committees.

At the same time, justice and propriety demand your immediate investigation of the official conduct of the Rev. J. M. Hanson, and that of the Rev. Joseph Frye, in reference to our particular cases.

That the great Head of the Church may direct your deliberations in this, and all other matters, which are interwoven with the best interests of Zion, is the sincere prayer of your memorialists.

*Baltimore, April, 1828.*

---

To this memorial the conference returned the following resolutions in reply.

RESOLUTIONS passed by the Baltimore Annual Conference, in reply to the memorial of the expelled brethren.

1. *Resolved by the Baltimore Annual Conference in conference assembled*, That ministers or members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who do not obey the citations of the Church to appear before inferior judicatories, in cases of accusation or complaint; or who neglect to avail themselves of the intermediate appellate judicatories for redress of alleged grievances, are not entitled to come before higher judicatories, either as appellants or complainants.

2. That to sanction or countenance a contrary course of proceeding, would in the judgment of this conference, be subversive of wholesome and sound discipline.

3. That if the suspended local preachers in Baltimore, on the dissolution of the District Conference, had appeared before the Quarterly Meeting Conference as cited, and objected to the jurisdiction of that body, if they thought proper to do so; in such case, on an appeal, this conference would have fully considered and decided on the whole subject, embracing the question of the legality of the dissolution of the Baltimore District Conference, and the jurisdiction of the Quarterly Meeting Conference. But as those local preachers preferred to pursue a different course, and one, in the judgment of this conference, both irregular and disorderly; making inflammatory appeals to the public, declaring that they had no other alternative, and that a Church court, even if righteously constituted, could not be considered to have admissible jurisdiction in such a case, this conference judge it both useless, and inconsistent with correct and necessary principles of discipline and order, in these circumstances to take further cognizance of the subject.

4. That the secretary be, and he hereby is directed to furnish a copy of the preceding resolutions to Dr. Samuel K. Jennings, and others, signers of the communication from Baltimore, addressed to the conference.

*Carlisle, Penn., April 18, 1828.*

---

At the session of the above named Baltimore Annual Conference, Mr. Dorsey was again tried on the same charges for which he was suspended at the preceding session, with others of a similar nature, in his absence, and was excommunicated. The Rev. William C. Pool was also expelled at the same conference for circulating the Mutual Rights and addressing a Union Society.

In order to secure to themselves and friends christian communion, the expelled members united under the following instrument of association.

COPY OF THE INSTRUMENT under which the expelled members and ministers, in Baltimore, united, "in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation."

We the undersigned, formerly members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Baltimore, having been excluded from the fellowship of that body, by what we conceive to be an unjustifiable process, based upon insufficient charges, and those charges not sustained by competent testimony, have, for the present, agreed to unite together, as a society of original Methodists, under the "General Rules of the United Societies" prepared by the Rev. John and Charles Wesley. Our object is to wait, and see whether the present abuses in the administration of the government will be corrected. If they should, and freedom of inquiry and

public discussion be permitted in the Methodist Episcopal Church, it will afford us pleasure to return, provided we can do so without relinquishing the opinions for which we have been excluded, namely,—an honest, and as we believe, enlightened conviction, that the present form of government in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so far as it precludes the grand principle of REPRESENTATION, and confines all legislative, executive and judicial powers to the itinerant ministry, is unscriptural and anti-Christian;—and that reform in the government of said Church, is necessary, in order to its essential and permanent prosperity. With these views, we solemnly unite in the name of the Great Head of the Church, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, receiving the Holy Scriptures as our guide; and for prudential purposes, adopting as an instrument of union, the “General Rules” of Messrs. John and Charles Wesley; with such subsequent regulations as our peculiar circumstances may from time to time require.

John Chappell,  
 John J. Harrod,  
 Wesley Starr,  
 John Kennard,  
 William K. Boyle,  
 Arthur Emmerson,  
 Ebenezer Strahan,  
 John H. W. Hawkins,  
 Thomas Patterson,  
 Samuel Krebs,  
 Thomas Parsons,

Thomas Jarrett,  
 John Gephart, Jr.  
 John P. Howard,  
 Levi R. Reese,  
 Lambert Thomas,  
 Samuel Jarrett,  
 James R. Forman,  
 George Northerman,  
 Samuel Thompson,  
 Samuel Guest,  
 John P. Paul.

*Baltimore, December 23, 1827.*

We the undersigned, elders, deacons, and licensed preachers, subscribe our names respectively, to the

foregoing instrument, approving the objects contemplated therein.

Samuel K. Jennings,  
Daniel E. Reese,  
James R. Williams,  
William Kesley,  
Thomas McCormick,

Luther J. Cox,  
John S. Reese,  
John C. French,  
Reuben T. Boyd,  
John Valiant.

*Baltimore, January 26, 1828.*

We will here record the proceedings of the female friends of the persecuted brethren in Baltimore.

*Proceedings of the Female friends of the persecuted brethren in Baltimore.*

*Baltimore, December 31st, 1827.*

At a meeting of female members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, convened at the Rev. Dr. Jennings', for the purpose of taking into consideration, the most advisable course to be pursued, by the wives, and friends of those members of said Church, who have been expelled, and of those ministers who are suspended by the official members, of the Baltimore station, for the sake of reform.

The meeting was opened with prayer.—And on motion, Mrs. Rebecca Hall was called to the chair, and Mrs. Wesley Woods was appointed secretary.—On motion, *resolved*, That the members of this meeting deeply regret the necessity of withdrawing from the Methodist Episcopal Church, yet from a conviction of duty, we do hereby resolve to withdraw from said Church, when our husbands, fathers or friends shall have been expelled.

On motion, *resolved*, that a committee of nine, be appointed to consider, and report on the most advisable

measures to be adopted by those females, who have determined to withdraw from the Church; the following were appointed said committee, viz:—Mrs. Mummey, Mrs. Jennings, Mrs. Harrod, Mrs. Woods, Mrs. French, Mrs. Kennard, Mrs. Reese, Miss L. Martin, and Mrs. Owings.

The meeting then adjourned, to give the committee time to prepare and report such measures as they may deem most advisable.

REBECCA HALL, *President.*

MARY ANN WOODS, *Secretary.*

*Monday, January 7, 1828.*

The meeting convened for the purpose of hearing the report of the committee. The following report was read, and unanimously adopted.

#### REPORT.

The committee appointed to inquire into the best measures to be adopted by the female friends of reform in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in this city, to secure their present peace and union, and their future happiness, have had the subject under serious and deliberate consideration, and beg leave to report; that inasmuch as it was unanimously resolved at our meeting on the 31st December, that on the expulsion of our husbands, fathers, &c., we would feel it our duty to withdraw from the Church and unite with our expelled friends, it is expedient, in the opinion of your committee, that the wives, daughters, &c., of our friends and brethren already expelled, withdraw from the Church; and, that all who determine on this course, should address a joint letter to Mr. Hanson, stating their determination to withdraw, and assigning their reasons for so doing; and also, requesting of him a certificate of their acceptable membership.

And your committee further beg leave to submit the following, as the form of a suitable instrument, to be adopted and subscribed by the females, who may withdraw from the Church.

#### DECLARATION.

The subscribers, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Baltimore, believing that the form of government of the said Church, is, in some of its features, contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and that it deprives a large proportion of the ministers and members of said Church, of their natural and Christian rights; and believing, that the ruling authorities in this city, have greatly abused the power they hold, to the injury of the cause of religion, in that they have suspended eleven local preachers, by what we consider improper measures, for aiding the cause of reform; and have expelled twenty-two lay members for the same cause; and have treated others hardly, whom they have not expelled; and have for the same cause deprived most of our former class-leaders of their official standing, (which preachers, members and leaders are our companions, fathers, children, or highly esteemed brethren, in whom we have the fullest Christian confidence,) and by these means, they have created a state of things, calculated to destroy Christian union and Christian confidence.

Therefore, for these and other considerations, we have determined and do hereby agree, to dissolve for the present, our connexion with the Methodist Episcopal Church by withdrawing therefrom, and that we will address a joint letter to Rev. J. M. Hanson, expressive of our determination to this effect, and request of him a certificate of our acceptable standing in the Church.



And we do hereby declare, that we have been impelled to this measure, only by existing difficulties in the Church; and that so soon as those difficulties shall be removed, and our expelled and injured friends shall be restored to the enjoyment of their former standing and privileges, on proper and Christian principles, it will be our delight, to return to the Church, from which we now reluctantly retire. We further agree, that until the way of our return shall become practicable, or the openings of Providence shall mark out to us some other way, we will unite in Christian communion, and religious worship with each other, and with our brethren and sisters, who have been or may be persecuted from the Church for reform principles.

And finally, we hereby declare, that we have not been influenced to adopt this measure by the persuasion or other means of our husbands, relatives or friends, but from a deliberate and settled conviction of duty to our God, ourselves and our injured friends and brethren. We, therefore, hereby solemnly unite ourselves together, for the reasons, and for the purposes before named, with a firm reliance on the support and assistance of Almighty God, in this important duty and engagement.

The committee further beg leave to offer the following as a suitable form of a letter, to be sent to the preacher in charge of this station, by those females who may determine to withdraw from the Church.

---

[The Letter, after receiving the signatures appended, was presented to Mr. Hanson, the Saturday preceding the love-feast.]

*Rev. James M. Hanson.*—We the subscribers, female members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Baltimore, feel ourselves under the necessity of

addressing you on a subject peculiarly painful. For a series of years we have been endeavouring, in our humble sphere, to serve God and make our way to heaven. And long since the Methodist Episcopal Church, became the home of our choice, where we had fondly hoped to dwell in the peaceful enjoyment of the means of grace, and the ordinances of Christianity, to the end of life. In this Church, our dearest Christian associations and religious friendships were formed and nourished. Our hopes, our fears, our wishes, all were identified with those of the church of our choice. Around all her ordinances, her services, her ministers, our best affections were entwined; and for her peace and prosperity, our daily prayers were offered to a throne of grace. This preference was not given to the Methodist Episcopal Church, because we considered her government more perfect than that of others; for indeed we were no more careful to inquire into that subject, than our preachers were to give us instruction concerning it; but our preference grew out of the purity of her doctrines, the piety of her members, the excellency of her moral discipline, and her itinerant plan. And though recent events have led us to examine, more closely than heretofore, the Methodist Discipline, and this examination has resulted in a conviction of its defectiveness, in many particulars; yet, we could have borne those comparatively trivial inconveniencies, and could have lived happily in the bosom of the Church all our days, nor had we thought of forsaking her communion till death, but for recent occurrences which have taken place under your administration and superintendence. But *Sir*, to see a large number of our highly esteemed local preachers excluded from the pulpits, arraigned, condemned and

excommunicated, and the seal of official silence set upon the lips which have so often conveyed heavenly consolation to our minds and hearts; to see our beloved class-leaders torn from us, and deprived of their official standing, and a large number of our lay brethren expelled without a crime; and to see the unwarrantable measures by which these distressing results have been effected, is too painful for us! In short, to find our dear companions, fathers, brothers, children and friends treated as criminals and enemies, prosecuted, suspended and expelled; denounced as backsliders and disturbers of the peace; and to be ourselves treated coldly and distantly by our former friends, and by our pastors; and all for a mere difference of opinion about Church government, is more than we feel bound in Christian Charity longer to endure; and we, therefore, feel it our duty in the fear of God, though with emotions of poignant sorrow, and with aching hearts, to withdraw from the Church of our choice and fondest attachments. To this painful resort we are driven by the measures you have taken against our friends and brethren. To remain in the Church under the circumstances, now existing, would be to evince a want of filial, connubial, and fraternal attachment to our persecuted friends, and a want of self-respect.

We, therefore, request you, to consider us as withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to furnish us a joint, or individual certificate of our acceptable standing, as soon as convenient.

Hannah L. Harrod,  
Catharine Mummey,  
Guinilda Mummey,  
Mary Kennard,  
Elizabeth Kennard,

Isabella Northerman,  
Anna Jarrett,  
Ruth Reese,  
Rebecca R. Reese,  
Margaret Reese,

Sarah Krebs,  
 Jane Thomas,  
 Elizabeth Williams,  
 Sarah Williams,  
 Elizabeth Taylor,  
 Mary Williams,  
 Frances Williams,  
 Catharine Williams,  
 Hannah Jennings,  
 Mary Owings,  
 Elizabeth Crouch,  
 Elinor Gephart,  
 Maria Paul,  
 Elizabeth Forman,  
 Phillippa Starr,  
 Rachel Hawkins,  
 Elizabeth Baxley,  
 Susan Guest,  
 Sarah Emmerson,

Mary Reese,  
 Margaret Patterson,  
 Mary French,  
 Sidney Boyd,  
 Rebecca Jane Roberts,  
 Lucy Fore,  
 Mary Jane Thomas,  
 Jemima Jones,  
 Hannah Martin,  
 Letitia M. Martin,  
 Maria M. Martin,  
 Maria Cox,  
 Mary Meads,  
 Mary Ann Woods,  
 Catharine Wallace,  
 Elizabeth Brit,  
 Mary Ann Valiant,  
 Elizabeth Valiant.

*Baltimore, January 26, 1828.*

[Sisters Anna G. Chappell, the wife, and Sarah A. Chappell, the sister of our aged brother John Chappell, had withdrawn two days previously to the first meeting.]

The expelled laymen associated on the 22d December, 1827. The preachers united with them on the 26th January, 1828. And the female members, who had withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, joined the association a few days afterwards.

The association elected the preachers and ministers to serve in the same relations and offices they respectively held previously to their expulsion, and the instrument declaring this fact, was recorded in the clerk's office, Baltimore.

This act was deemed necessary to guard against the effects of representations made to the community by old side men, that being deprived of membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church our parchments became null and void, and consequently our ministerial acts would be illegal. Though these representations were erroneous as it regarded our legal qualifications, yet, as they might make an injurious impression on the minds of the uninformed, the society deemed it proper to elect the ministers to fill the offices designated by their parchments. By this measure the ministers obtained a standing in society which no Methodist *Episcopal* ordination could surpass.

The following information relating to the prosperity of the Associated Methodist Reformers in the City of Baltimore is given in the July number of the Mutual Rights for 1828.

*Associated Methodist Reformers in the City of Baltimore.*

It will doubtless be acceptable to our brethren, throughout the United States, to be informed occasionally, of the condition of this little band of persecuted advocates of christian liberty. And it would also, it is presumed, meet the approbation of the brethren, if all associations similarly situated were to communicate, through the Mutual Rights, a brief account of their condition.

Since our last notice of the association, considerable accessions have been made; and at the monthly meeting, held on the 12th of June, fifty-two persons joined, nearly all members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and most of them of very long standing. Many more are preparing to follow their example. Several persons have also joined the association on probation, who have

been recently converted at the religious meetings held by the reformers.

The Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, William C. Pool, and William Bawden, have been received as members and ministers in the association. Daniel Gildea, whose license to exhort was withheld at the last Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city, on account of his being a member of the Union Society, was received as a member of the association, and authorised to discharge the duties of an exhorter. Brother Gildea is a venerable and interesting man, and was one of Mr. Wesley's converts, or as we sometimes say, one of his spiritual children.

The brethren are by no means disposed to accede to the terms proposed by the late General Conference, for re-admission into the Methodist Episcopal Church; not a single individual among them has acceded to the conditions prescribed, nor has any one left the association. They continue associated under Mr. Wesley's general rules, harmoniously worshipping God under their own vine and fig tree; awaiting the result of the General Convention, which will be held next November.

At the monthly meeting for July, thirty-three new members joined the association, several of them were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of very long standing, some of them more than forty years. There are now upwards of two hundred members in the association, and fourteen preachers.

The expelled preachers stand higher in public estimation, than they did previously to their expulsion. The citizens view them as good men persecuted for righteousness' sake; and the ministers of other denominations frequently call upon them to officiate in their congregations.

## CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL SYMPATHY OF REFORMERS IN BEHALF OF  
THE EXPELLED BRETHREN IN BALTIMORE.

THOSE violent proceedings in Baltimore drew forth the sympathy of reformers in all parts of the United States. The editorial committee received numerous communications for publication in the Mutual Rights expressive of the abhorrence in which the writers viewed the doings of the power party. Several of these were the deliberate expressions of whole societies who felt indignant at the conduct of our persecutors. Out of many we will furnish for this chapter a few; in view of exhibiting to posterity the great excitement produced among reformers in different parts of the country, by the violent proceedings in Baltimore had against their brethren.

At a general meeting of the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Pittsburg, held at the large meeting house, on the evening of the 27th September, 1827, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Whereas the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Pittsburg, have learned with unaffected grief, that intolerant measures of proscription and persecution, are in a state of progression by the Church authorities in Baltimore, against the advocates of ecclesiastical liberty in that city, and being deeply affected with the deplorable consequences, likely to result from the misguided zeal of our brethren, to destroy the means of religious freedom, by expelling its advocates from the Church.



*Therefore, Resolved,* That all men have a right freely to form and express opinions which do not contravene the obligations of morality and religion.

*Resolved 2dly,* That the obligations of morality and religion, enjoin inquiry and discussion, in every question involving the present and eventual interests of our race.

*Resolved 3dly,* That the Gospel of peace, disclaims the aid of the bitter persecuting passions, to help its cause, or extend its influence over the judgment and affections of the human family: instituting as it does, a sacred charity, peace on earth and good will to men.

*Resolved 4thly,* That our brethren in Baltimore who bear their testimony against exclusive clerical domination in the Methodist Episcopal Church, obey the highest and noblest dictates of conscience, enlightened by revelation, and sustained by the common sense of mankind.

*Resolved 5thly,* That the oppressive proceedings against those brethren in Baltimore, for their principles, shew beyond all doubt, that *an administration* projecting and cherishing such acts and doings, to rend and scatter the flock of Christ, needs *limitations and restrictions*.

*Resolved 6thly,* That we shall view the expulsion from the Church, of those brethren in Baltimore, who have had the christian courage to stand forth against the "onward march" of clerical power, "whose tremendous tendency is always to accumulation;" as an open violation of the rights of every member, who will thenceforth stand pledged to redeem the character of the most modern reformed Church in christendom, from the odium of inquisitorial injustice against her members.

*Resolved 7thly,* That copies of these resolutions be forwarded, attested by the chairman and secretary, to

each of the Baltimore City stations, and to the Rev. Dr. Jennings, in behalf of those brethren with whom he is called to suffer.

THOMAS COOPER, *Chairman.*

CHARLES AVERY, *Secretary.*

*Pittsburg, September 27th, 1827.*

---

Agreeably to notice, a number of the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Norfolk and Princess Ann circuit favourable to reform in its government, met in the Baptist Church in the borough of Norfolk, on Friday evening, the 2d of November, 1827. The meeting was opened with a discourse by Dr. John French, on Job, 27 ch. part of 5th and 6th verses.

After divine service was concluded, Seth Foster was called to the chair, and John J. Burroughs appointed secretary. The object of the meeting being stated by Dr. French and the chairman, a committee of three members, viz. Rev. John French, Rev. Thomas Blunt and John J. Burroughs were appointed to draft a preamble and resolutions: after a short interval, the committee presented the following preamble and resolutions, which were adopted.—Whereas the Christian Church, in the first and purest age of Christianity, was governed by her ministers and members in conjunction; And whereas in the Methodist Episcopal Church, all power, both temporal and spiritual, is placed in the hands of a part of her ministers, to the exclusion of the rest, and the whole body of her people; And whereas it is the right of all freemen to have some voice in the government by which they are regulated, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical; And whereas the privation of this right naturally produces arrogance on the one hand and de-

basement on the other, and arrogance and debasement being alike unbecoming the family of Jesus Christ; and other Protestant Churches having checks and balances in their government; And whereas the present distracted state of our Church is owing to the accumulation of power in the hands of a few.—It is therefore,

*Resolved* 1st. That in order to restore peace and harmony to the Church, it is necessary to restore the people to their ancient privileges in the Church of Christ.

2dly. That without an equitable distribution of power in the Church, her members will hang only on the naked mercy of the ruling party.

3dly. That whilst we desire a change in the temporal economy of the Church, we heartily approve of her doctrines, of class-meetings, love-feasts, and a travelling ministry, together with the general rules, so called.

4thly. That we view with deep regret and astonishment the violent opposition which is raised against what must be considered reasonable by all unprejudiced, reflecting men.

5thly. That we sympathize with those brethren who have been arraigned by the Church authorities for advocating liberal principles.

6thly. That we highly approve of the periodical called Mutual Rights, as an able and useful work on Church government.

7thly. That we will co-operate with our reforming brethren in every prudent measure to improve the government of the Church.

8thly. That we will send two delegates to the General Convention to be held in the City of Baltimore, on the 15th instant, for the purpose of promoting suitable modifications in the government of our Church.

Whereupon, the Rev. Dr. John French, a local preacher of Norfolk, and John B. Jones, a layman of Princess Anne County, were unanimously elected:

And on motion, it is further *Resolved*, That in case either of the said delegates should be unable to attend, that the committee appointed to draft the foregoing preamble and resolutions, be authorized to supply the vacancy, and that these proceedings be signed by the chairman and secretary, and transmitted to the editorial committee in Baltimore, with a request that they may be inserted in the Mutual Rights.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this meeting be given to our brethren of the Baptist Church, for the use of their house this evening.

SETH FOSTER, *Chairman*.

J. J. BURROUGHS, *Secretary*.

---

Resolutions, passed at a meeting of the associated friends of reform, held on the 13th November, 1827, in Philadelphia, Doct. Isaac James in the chair.

*Philadelphia, Nov. 13, 1827.*

Whereas, the exercise of power by the governors of Churches in assuming to censure and to excommunicate fellow-Christians, for any other cause than that of sin against the morality of the New Testament, or against the doctrines, as generally received by the body to which such individuals may belong, are acknowledged evils of the worst sort. It is by this meeting therefore,

*Resolved*, 1. That we utterly disapprove of the suspension of our brother, Dennis B. Dorsey, from his ministerial functions, as an itinerant Methodist preacher. Because we do not think, that in his case, the Baltimore Annual Conference acted on the ground of Scripture

authority, but on party grounds; and that their decision was made to suppress Christian liberty.

*Resolved 2.* That, notwithstanding the friends of reform in the system of our Church government, residing in the city and county of Philadelphia, have refrained from thus expressing their disapprobation in Mr. Dorsey's case, heretofore, they have entertained tender sympathies for their suffering brother, and have always regarded him, as a sufferer for righteousness' sake; being convinced by the testimony alledged on each side of this question, that Mr. Dorsey employed no other means than such as are lawful and expedient—means which Christianity has legalized and sanctified, and such as all good men in opposition to arbitrary power, have, and always must use—the means of inquiry and of imparting knowledge.

*Resolved 3.* That we utterly disapprove of the proceedings, now conducting in Baltimore, under the special superintendence of the preacher in charge of that station, against the members of the Union Society of Methodists in that city. Because, as freemen, the members of that society, possess an undoubted right to animadvert on a humanly devised system of Church polity; and to use lawful and expedient means for its amendment, in all those particulars, in principle and in administration, wherein that system is in opposition to Christian principles, precepts and examples.

*Resolved 4.* That in our opinion, any system of government, which denies to its members the right of suffrage; and of representation in its legislative department, and invests its ministers with the sole power of legislation, and at the same time, authorizes them to exercise the inquisitorial powers over the freedom of

speech and the press, is demonstrably wrong in principle, and pernicious in its effects; and ought on the highest grounds of duty, to be strenuously opposed by every enlightened Christian.

*Resolved 5.* That we highly approve of the integrity, meekness, and Christian courage of our brethren of the Union Society of the city of Baltimore, and think them entitled to the gratitude of reformers in all places; and we tender ours to them in testimony of our high consideration of their virtues and services.

*Resolved 6.* That we regard the increased prevalence of the principles advocated and defended, in "The Mutual Rights," as of the utmost importance to the integrity and well-being of the American Methodist body; and, therefore, earnestly recommend that work to the patronage of every member of our Church, who is friendly to Christian rights, and privileges.

*Attest.*

WM. WHITESIDES, *Sec'y.*

At a large and respectable meeting of the Union Society of Steubenville, held in the Methodist Episcopal Meeting House, on Monday evening, February 25th, 1828, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, the eventful die is cast, and the melancholy tidings announced, that our pious and highly esteemed brother, the Rev. Doctor Jennings, with ten other pious preachers, and twenty-two members of respectable standing, have received the sentence of expulsion from the Methodist Episcopal Church; through the Rev. James M. Hanson, the preacher in charge of the Baltimore station; because they presumed to express their opinion upon the government of their own Church.

And whereas, we would not impugn the motives of the authors of this black chapter in the history of Methodism; yet from the best light we have, we are impelled to believe, that by a blind infatuation, the expulsion of those persecuted ministers and members has been effected by a judge and jury who had prejudged their cause, and virtually pronounced them guilty, before the charges against them were reduced to writing, or any evidence against them heard, and before their form of trial took place; a procedure that is at war with every principle of righteousness, and in its tendency cannot be viewed in any other light, than a bold effort to establish the horrible doctrine, that the will of the preacher in charge, is the tenure by which members of the Methodist Episcopal Church hold their membership.

And whereas, we are reluctant to believe that the approaching General Conference, can recognize the principle, that one party under the influence of party excitement, has a right to try and expel the other for participating in the present interesting discussion carried on in the Church; yet we will not conceal the fact, that from the "signs of the times," we have much cause to fear that *that* conference will not extend an honourable and equitable relief to our much injured brethren; seeing this cannot be done on any principle that would require them to abandon the liberty of speech and freedom of the press; an abandonment which would not comport with their duty as followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and would be incompatible with a due respect for themselves.

And whereas, we are conscious that we possess a sincere attachment to the doctrines, the ordinances, the



means of grace and moral discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that we, through God's grace, are striving to make our calling and election sure; we nevertheless patronize the Mutual Rights, and have formed a Union Society, and thus have done the very acts for which alone the pains and penalties of excommunication have been inflicted upon our persecuted brethren in the city of Baltimore. Therefore resolved:

1. That we deem the present a crisis in which all reformers, more especially such as have patronized the Mutual Rights and formed Union Societies, are called upon by every honourable and moral obligation, to remonstrate in language that cannot be misunderstood, against the unhallowed persecution inflicted upon their brethren in Baltimore.

2. That we most cordially approve of the unyielding integrity and Christian temperament manifested by the subjects of the Baltimore persecution, during the pendency of the inquisition in their case; and view the plan under which they have united for public and social worship, eminently calculated to advance their religious progress, as well as to enable them to keep up a free and unrestrained intercourse with such as are engaged in the common cause, until Providence kindly extends some propitious opening to us all.

3. That we tender the best feelings of our hearts to our pious and magnanimous sisters, the relatives of our persecuted brethren in the city of Baltimore; their sufferings excite our tenderest sympathies, their doings and sentiments as published in the Mutual Rights, furnish a theme worthy of the fairest page in the annals of our Church. And although cold-blooded bigots of our time, may scan them without emotion; yet the feeling and

virtuous of coming days, will admire their magnanimity, and shed a tear over their complaints.

4. That in our judgment, the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, ought to regard a discreet liberty of speech and freedom of the press, as among their dearest rights, since they are the only mediums through which those who would perpetrate maladministration can be kept in check: we esteem them as the bulwarks of our religious liberties, and will not accord to any compromise that would deprive us of them.

5. That our tender regards are justly due to the Rev. Doctor Jennings and his partners in suffering; their cause is ours, with them we stand or fall; and under a firm conviction that they have been unjustly and illegally deprived of their privileges in the Church of their own choice, we still recognize them as ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

6. That we consider the dissolution of the District Conference of the Baltimore District, after it had met and commenced its regular course of business, a most glaring violation of a plain rule in discipline, and a violent outrage upon the interest of those of its members who were to be put upon their trial before that body.

7. That although our ardent desire is, that the ruling authorities in our Church, would restore peace and harmony to our beloved Zion, by timely extending liberty and equality to its ministers and members; yet, neither the terrors of excommunication nor dread of secessions, can deter us from contributing our mite to the great cause of Mutual Rights.

8. That we do most cordially approve of the proceedings of the General Convention of Reformers recently held in the city of Baltimore, that we consider

the memorial as containing doctrines in accordance with truth and justice; that it is clear in its reasoning, temperate in its demands, and respectful in its language, and ought to be heard.

9. That while the essential interest of the Church, the cause of truth and a jealous regard for our own rights, demand that we should enter our solemn protest against the high-handed proscription attempted in our Church, we must not forget that we are required to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us.

10. *Resolved*, That a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions be signed by the chairman and secretary, and forwarded to Doctor Samuel K. Jennings, of the city of Baltimore, for publication in the "Mutual Rights."

JAMES HALL, *Chairman*.

A. SUTHERLAND, *Secretary*.

---

At a meeting of the Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, on Thursday evening, January 10th, 1828, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1. *Resolved*, That we cordially approve of the organization of Union Societies, and heartily recommend to our friends and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church generally, the necessity of establishing them in every station and circuit throughout these United States.

2. *Resolved*, That we approve of the monthly publication entitled, "The Mutual Rights, &c." and do hereby earnestly and sincerely recommend it to the travelling preachers, local preachers, and private members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in every sta-

tion and circuit of the Union—as one of the most useful publications, both as it regards facts and arguments on the subject of Church government, of any periodical of which we have any knowledge; and we do earnestly request all the Union Societies to give it a speedy and general circulation.

3. *Resolved*, That we do most feelingly sympathize with our persecuted brethren in Baltimore and elsewhere who have unjustly suffered for the cause of truth and liberty, and rejoice that they have endured their trials with that deportment which characterizes the christian.

4. *Resolved*, That we will use all lawful and prudential means to have our brethren of the Union Society of Baltimore and elsewhere (who have been expelled for their reform principles) restored; and in order to their restoration we do further resolve to petition the next General Conference, (if not before restored) to pass such resolutions as will require the Baltimore Annual Conference, the presiding elders and preachers in charge of stations and circuits wherever such expelled members reside, immediately to restore to membership and to all the privileges of the Methodist Episcopal Church, all and every one of those thus expelled; and in the mean time, we do earnestly recommend to our expelled brethren to continue to evidence their desire of salvation, by doing no harm; by doing all the good in their power; not neglecting the good cause of reform.

5. *Resolved*, That however perilous our situation may be as members of the Union Society, we do pledge ourselves to each other, never to abandon the cause of reform in the Methodist Episcopal Church, as set forth and maintained in the “Mutual Rights,” unless con-

vinced by fair argument that we are in the wrong; but press our claims as preachers and members, and continue to remonstrate against assumed prerogatives, until we obtain the right of suffrage and lay representation.

6. *Resolved*, That as individuals and as members of the Union Society of Cincinnati, we do most solemnly disapprove of the high-handed measures of the anti-reformers in the Baltimore City station and elsewhere, against reformers, and consider the conduct of J. M. Hanson, (preacher in charge of the Baltimore station) as highly reprehensible, together with all those who may have advised or in any way assisted him in the work of persecution, though he should be a bishop.

7. *Resolved*, That as members of the Union Society of Cincinnati, and as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we do fully believe in and accord with the doctrines taught in said Church, and that we do most cordially approve of that part of the discipline which inculcates piety, morality and practical religion, together with the rules and regulations designed to perpetuate a holy ministry and maintain the itinerant plan.

8. *Resolved*, That we approve of the proceedings of the late convention of reformers held in the city of Baltimore, and that we are highly gratified with that manly, dignified, and christian like manner in which they asserted and maintained our rights as freemen and as christians; and we tender them our warmest thanks for their work of faith and labour of love.

9. *Resolved, lastly*, That two copies of the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the chairman and secretary, one of which shall be forwarded to the Rev. J. M. Hanson, the preacher in charge of the Baltimore

City station, and the other to the Rev. Dr. S. K. Jennings, for publication in the "Mutual Rights."

E. HALL, *Chairman.*

JOHN HAUGHTON, *Secretary.*

---

At a special meeting of the Methodist Union Society of Queen Ann's County, Eastern Shore of Maryland, convened in Centreville, agreeably to public notice, on the 10th of December, 1827, among other proceedings, an address was submitted, read and passed, the president and secretary were directed to sign and publish it. The following extracts are made from the address.

After detailing the proceedings at Baltimore, the society say; Now, we appeal to every candid and unprejudiced man among you, and ask, if these proceedings, and this exercise of power, by the preacher in charge, do not demonstrate clearly, that some reformation in our government is necessary, and that there should be some restrictions imposed upon the preachers? What man is safe when the strictest morality, and the most exemplary piety, will not prevent his expulsion from the Church, if he chance to find fault with her government. Our travelling preachers have been changing and modifying our government, ever since we were formed into an independent Church; and have manifested as much warmth in the discussion of their different views as reformers have done. Some have contended for the present order of things. Some are against the bishops, others are against the presiding elders, whilst others wish them to be elected by the preachers. The advocates of these different opinions, have spoken and written what they pleased, and have carried into the General Conferences at some periods the most unhallowed

passions; and the discussions have been so warm as almost to drive the bishops from their seats, and to threaten an almost immediate division of the Church. Caucuses were held, at the General Conference of 1824, every night, by the two contending parties. Two bishops were to be elected. Each party named its candidates. The friends of the present order, named Messrs. Soule and Beauchamp, and those in favour of the election of presiding elders brought forward Messrs. Hedding and Emory. The contest was a close one, and Messrs. Soule and Hedding were chosen. A book-agent was then to be chosen, and the same scene was acted over again. Mr. John Emory was brought forward by one side, and a Mr. Lee by the other, and Mr. Emory was elected. Notwithstanding, however, the warmth, and bitterness with which these controversies were carried on, no prosecutions were instituted against the preachers. They can do or say what they please against the discipline or each other with impunity; but if a local preacher or private member dare to say they are not immaculate, or do wrong, they are accused of "speaking evil of ministers," and are tried and expelled. Now what greater crime is it, we beg to know, for a local preacher, or layman to speak against the discipline, than it is for a travelling preacher? We aver, that as many hard things have been said against the conduct of the bishops on the one side, and against the preachers in favour of the election of the presiding elders on the other, as were ever uttered by the reform local preachers and laymen in Baltimore or elsewhere. Ask the members of the General Conference of 1820 and 1824, what was said by the one side, when a paper was produced on the other with the names of preachers pledging



themselves to support (without discussion) a certain measure recommended by the bishops, or if not actually produced, when it was alleged that such a paper was in existence. What was said also against the ordination of bishop Soule, and what was the conduct, feelings, and proceedings of the General Conference, when, in violation of a pledge to the contrary, after the departure of the New York delegates, one side called up the consideration of a measure against which those brethren would have voted. Ask also, what warmth of discussion took place on the pew question, and the question of slavery. These instances are adverted to, merely, for the purpose of shewing that the travelling preachers have done and said, with impunity, precisely what the old side allege the reformers have done. We go further and say, what *little* has been written by the old side, contains more abuse and *slander*, than any thing written by the reformers. To prove this, we will refer you to the address of the Baltimoreans, signed by William Wilkins, chairman. In this paper, the reformers are denounced as enemies to the Church, &c. And in it as severe an invective as could be penned, is pronounced against the Rev. Mr. M'Caine. Why were not these brethren tried for "*evil speaking* and *slander*?" The reason is obvious, their writings were in favour of the present order of things. Time would fail us to enumerate the many and glaring attacks upon us; and an enumeration of them would swell this address to too great a length for perusal. Now, who are these reformers thus denounced? Why, many of them are travelling preachers, local preachers, and laymen of unexceptionable piety and character. Men who have grown grey in the service of the Church, or have been

active in her support, and whose characters would do honour to any society.

The object of this address is to enter our solemn protest against their sweeping denunciations of us, and all other reformers; and to express thus publicly our abhorrence to the uncharitable course pursued in Baltimore; and our determination not to treat our discarded brethren there as *heretics*; but to extend to them the right hand of fellowship, and to support their cause, while ever they maintain their characters as Christians, and their attachment to the Methodist Church. We regard the whole proceedings against them as a nullity; and, therefore, recognize them still as our brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They have been denied an impartial trial; and have been expelled from the Church for the publication of the writings of travelling preachers who are now members elect to the General Conference. The authors of these writings, instead of being tried and expelled, have been, by the advice of at least one of the bishops, elected to the General Conference. Who will then be found among us to justify the Baltimore proceedings? Who is ready to expel a Christian from our society, because he dissents from us in opinion upon Church government, or thinks proper to utter his dissent? We candidly confess, that our prejudices are not so strong (and we pray God that they never may be so,) to turn out our brethren of the old side, for their opposition to our views of Church polity. Such a spirit is not the spirit of Christ, and consequently is wrong. We still declare ourselves devoted to the moral and doctrinal principles of primitive Methodism, and wish for the prosperity of the Church, and firmly believe that a lay delegation in the General Conference

would be conducive to her interests. We entertain also a high respect for our founder and his distinguished coadjutors in the great work of man's salvation, and venerate their memories and services. We are also the advocates of itinerancy, class-meetings, love-feasts, &c. *the assertions of the Baltimore Address to the contrary, notwithstanding.*

JOHN D. EMORY, *President.*

THOMAS C. BROWNE, *Secretary.*

---

### CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL CONVENTION OF 1827.—MEMORIAL OF THE  
EXPULSED BRETHREN IN BALTIMORE.—RESOLU-  
TIONS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE IN REPLY.  
—CALL OF A GENERAL CONVENTION FOR NOVEM-  
BER, 1828.

THE delegates to the General Convention for November, 1827, assembled in the city of Baltimore, and prepared a memorial to the ensuing General Conference, which was to hold its session in Pittsburg in the following May, praying for a joint representation from the local ministry and membership in the rule-making department of the Church. A committee of three members was appointed to carry up the memorial to the General Conference, and a committee of nine members was also appointed to call another general convention, after the rising of the General Conference, if, in their judgment, the call of another general convention should be necessary. During the sitting of the General Con-

ference, the expelled brethren in Baltimore also sent up a memorial to that body, giving a brief account of the violent manner in which they had been expelled; and requesting the conference to take such measures as would restore them to the Church, and those who had withdrawn on their account, on principles which should secure to them and the Church the liberty of speech and of the press, without sanctioning the licentiousness of either. The following is a copy of that instrument.

*To the bishops and members of the General Conference,  
of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in conference  
assembled.*

*Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,*—The memorial of the undersigned, late ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Baltimore, respectfully sheweth: That for upwards of three years last past, a periodical called "The Mutual Rights," has been published in said city, under the direction of a committee of ministers and members of said Church, which periodical had for its object, the discussion of the propriety, and utility of introducing an equitable representation from the ministry and membership, into the legislative department of said Church.

Your memorialists beg leave to state, that most of the prominent writers for said periodical, are itinerant ministers of the said Church, all of whom we verily believe, are ardently attached to the interests thereof; and whose only object, in furnishing contributions for said periodical, was to obtain a well-balanced form of government, that said Church may become the glory of the present age, and the just admiration of posterity.

Your memorialists further state, that no formal charge was preferred against either the authors, or editors, by

any legal authorities of the Church, during the aforesaid period of three years; but in the month of July last, a select meeting of some of the ministers and members of this station, was held for a particular purpose; and after that purpose had been subserved, a motion was made, and carried, to appoint several persons, to examine the Mutual Rights, to ascertain if the discipline had not therein been violated.

Your memorialists would represent, that about the month of September last, the committee just referred to, called on some five or six members of the Union Society, individually, and demanded of each, an abandonment of the Union Society, and that they should withhold their aid from the Mutual Rights, as the exclusive terms on which a prosecution was to be avoided. Those brethren on whom the demand was made, did then, and do now believe, that the requisitions were such as neither the Word of God, nor the discipline of the Church recognized, as terms on which brethren in Christ Jesus, were to be continued in Church fellowship, and were therefore conscientiously impelled, to decline giving the pledges demanded.

A few days thereafter, charges and specifications, based on certain essays in the Mutual Rights, were handed by the prosecuting committee to the Rev. Mr. Hanson, against upwards of thirty members of the Union Society, which were sent by him, to the accused, with citations to trial, without a prior visit from him to either of the accused, to reconcile the parties and to prevent the unhappy collisions, and *exacerbations* of party feeling, consequent on a Church trial, involving so many individuals; and to prevent the justly to be deprecated issues which followed.

The first person cited for trial, was the Rev. Dr. Jennings, the chairman of the editorial committee, of the periodical. He respectfully requested of Mr. Hanson, time to correspond with the authors of the pieces, adduced as proof of the charges, but this was refused. He nevertheless appeared, and made the protest, accompanying this memorial, marked A, to which we solicit the attention of the General Conference. The most of the accused appeared, and entered their protests against the glaring absurdity of the procedure, as well as the prejudiced character of the committee of trial, more particularly the latter, who had aided in promoting the prosecutions; and moreover, had in a publication, and for which they had voted previously, prejudged our cases.

A considerable time after the trials (so called) Mr. Hanson sent us a communication informing us, that the committee had found us "*guilty*;" although the committee had reported that the charges and specifications were "*sustained*," and in the said communication, reiterated the demand made by the prosecutors, as before recited, and which were afterwards renewed, by Dr. Green. We cannot but consider it remarkable, that such a striking sameness of demand should be made, at three different periods, and by different persons. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Hanson's demand was declined on the part of the accused. A short time after the members were expelled, and the local preachers were suspended, the local preachers determined to take their trials at the District Conference, as provided by the discipline. The District Conference met, and after being organized, and ready for business, was violently and illegally dissolved. Now as we cannot suppose, that

the General Conference ever designed to transfer the business of a District Conference, to a Quarterly Meeting Conference, by such means as were employed on this occasion, and especially by the votes of coloured preachers, in a slave-holding State, and without allowing the subject to be discussed, we sincerely believe that the dissolution was illegal and void, and that the Quarterly Conference had no jurisdiction in the case.

The lay members received their citations, but they did not appear, for the same reason which served to make the local preachers more sensible of the injustice done them by the unlawful dissolution of the District Conference, which was, that we all knew the members of the Quarterly Meeting Conference, (with but very few exceptions) at a meeting called for the purpose, had by a vote, adopted a paper, which was published by themselves, in which it was stated, that the Mutual Rights had been rightly considered by the Baltimore Conference, to be an improper work; because in it anonymous writers were permitted to defame the travelling preachers, &c. Inasmuch, therefore, as the principal charge was speaking evil of ministers, and the specifications referred to the Mutual Rights, as the only evidence by which they expected to sustain the charge and specifications; it was a necessary conclusion, that they had already decided on the facts (so called) in our case. They considered all the members of the Union Society identified with the exceptionable papers,\* and

\*At the time of the prosecutions there were 133 male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church belonging to the Baltimore Union Society, all of whom were identified with the publication of the Mutual Rights; yet, only 33 of them were expelled for publishing that paper. These were considered *immoral* and thrown out of the bo-



of course we as members of the Union Society, were made the subjects of their denouncement. An appeal, to have been made under such circumstances, carried with it such a certain expectation of defeat, that our lay members could not consent to appear before the Quarterly Meeting Conference. Moreover, it was, and is our opinion, that the subject in dispute, was one which required special legislation, and after entering our protests, we intended to look to your body, for an act which would guarantee a better mode of procedure, should any instance of this kind, again occur. In the mean time, however, we were desirous of calling the attention of the Annual Conference to the illegality of the proceedings, and with that view, sent up to the conference the memorial marked "B," (see page 195,) and to which, that body returned the document marked "C," (see page 200.)

If we have erred, it should be remembered, that it was at a time of great excitement, and under extraordinary circumstances. We feel confident, that the case was entirely new.

Who ever before heard of the organization of a prosecuting committee in the Methodist Episcopal Church, consisting of seven persons? When was there ever a convocation of members of the Church, for the purpose of arraying themselves as prosecutors, against another party of the Church.

som of the Church, as such, while the remaining hundred, were not proceeded against, but retained as *innocent*, although they sent in to the prosecutors a list of 33 more names declaring themselves members of the Baltimore Union Society, with a promise, that when the prosecutors had disposed of those, they would send in as many more names.—*Author.*

The measure was so new, and so inconsistent with all our former acquaintance with Methodism, that we were apprehensive, our prosecutors had been encouraged thereto, by some persons in high authority in the Church.

When attacked in such a party manner, and under such new and fearful circumstances, we felt obliged to protest, and to publish our protests, that our friends and the public might know the highly improper course of procedure against us; that we might not be injured to any very great extent, by the varied attempts of our prosecutors and their friends, until a fair and full investigation could be had.

We are much surprised at the resolutions of the Baltimore Annual Conference. In the first resolution the utmost scrupulosity to the formalities of the discipline, is tenaciously observed in every point regarding the expelled, whilst not a word is said respecting the informalities, by which the prosecutions were characterized.

It appears from the second resolution, that a departure from the course prescribed, would be subversive of "wholesome discipline." That there is no general rule without some exception, is generally admitted, and we believe our cases furnish such an exception; having been prosecuted by those who had condemned us, and tried by those who had found us guilty, and published it to the world, previously to their sitting on our trials, and acknowledging that they had so acted, even on the trials! Surely this was a course of things extremely out of place and character. In the fourth resolution they state, that "if the local preachers, on the dissolution of the conference, had appeared before the Quarterly Meeting Conference, and objected to the jurisdiction of that

body, in such case, on an appeal, this conference would have fully considered and decided on the whole subject." This is a most surprising statement, in view of all the facts in the case. The local preachers did draw up a formal protest against the jurisdiction of the Quarterly Meeting Conference, to try their cases, which they sent in to the presiding elder, (the Rev. Joseph Frye,) as the document marked D, fully proves!\* With the most incontestible evidence before the local preachers, that a large majority of the Quarterly Meeting Conference, had prejudged their cases; that it was a party prosecution; that the presiding elder by favouring the dissolution of the District Conference, was also on the side of the prosecuting party—that Mr. Hanson was also on the same side—that the committee were also of the party—that almost all the members of the Quarterly Meeting Conference had voted them "enemies to Methodism," &c. In view of these facts, they declined a personal attendance, trusting that the Annual Conference would defend them against such oppression; or, that if the Annual Conference should sanction such procedure, that the General Conference would render them an impartial hearing, and decide only on the merits of the facts, and principles involved in the case.

Finally, brethren, your memorialists respectfully represent to the General Conference, that as we have been expelled from the Church, contrary as we believe to Scripture and Discipline, and which expulsion has been, and still is painful to our hearts, we do hereby request your highly respected body to take such measures, as in your wisdom, shall restore us to the Church of our former fellowship, and receive with us those who have

\*See page 193.

withdrawn on our account, on principles which shall secure to us and the Church, the liberty of speech and of the press, without sanctioning the licentiousness of either; and may the great Head of the Church have you in his holy keeping, and direct you in all your deliberations, to the praise of His glory, is the prayer of your memorialists.

---

*Resolutions of the General Conference, in reply to the memorial of the expelled brethren.*

Whereas an unhappy excitement has existed in some parts of our work, in consequence of the organization of what have been called Union Societies, for purposes and under regulations, believed to be inconsistent with the peace and harmony of the Church; and in relation to the character of much of the matter contained in a certain periodical publication called the Mutual Rights, in regard to which, certain expulsions from the Church have taken place; and whereas, this General Conference indulge a hope that a mutual desire may exist for conciliation and peace, and is desirous of leaving open a way for the accomplishment of so desirable an object, on safe and equitable principles. Therefore, Resolved, by the delegates of the Annual Conference, in General Conference assembled. 1st. That in view of the premises, and in the earnest hope that this measure may tend to promote this object, this General Conference affectionately advises, that no further proceedings may be had in any part of our work, against any member or minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of any past agency or concern, in relation to the above named periodical, or in relation to any Union Society above mentioned.

2d. If any persons expelled as aforesaid feel free to concede, that publications have appeared in said Mutual Rights, the nature and character of which were unjustifiably inflammatory, and do not admit of vindication; and that in others, though for want of proper information, or unintentionally have yet in fact misrepresented individuals and facts, and that they regret these things. If it be voluntarily agreed also that the Union Societies above alluded to shall be abolished; and the periodical called the Mutual Rights be discontinued at the close of the current volume, which shall be completed, with due respect to the conciliatory and pacific design of this arrangement; then this General Conference does hereby give authority, for the restoration to their ministry or membership respectively, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of any person or persons, so expelled as aforesaid; provided this arrangement shall be mutually assented to by any individual or individuals so expelled, and also by the Quarterly Meeting Conference, and the minister or preacher having the charge of any circuit or station, within which any such expulsion may have taken place; and that no such minister or preacher shall be obliged under this arrangement, to restore any such individual as leader of any class or classes, unless in his own discretion he shall judge it proper so to do; and provided also, that it be further mutually agreed, that no other periodical publication, to be devoted to the same controversy, shall be established on either side, it being expressly understood, at the same time, that this, if agreed to, will be on the ground not of any assumption of right to require this, but of mutual consent, for the restoration of peace, and that no individual will be hereby precluded

from issuing any publication which he may judge proper, on his own responsibility.

It is further understood, that any individual or individuals who may have withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of any proceedings in relation to the premises, may also be restored by mutual consent, under this arrangement, on the same principles above stated.

---

*Call of a General Convention for 1828.*

The Committee appointed in November, 1827, by the General Convention of the friends of reform, for the purpose of calling another similar convention, "if in the opinion of the committee it be necessary for the promotion of the great principles of Christian liberty, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, or for other purposes of importance to the general interests of the Methodist Reformers;" having been duly notified by their chairman, met in Baltimore on Monday, 21st July, 1828; and having taken into consideration the fate of the memorial sent up by the convention to the late General Conference; the decision of the General Conference upon the case of the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, the highly exceptionable terms proposed as the condition for the return of the brethren lately expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, and other places, on account of Union Societies; and the publication and circulation of the Mutual Rights, as also the ultimate proceedings of the General Conference, upon the subject of reform in general, as set forth by the report of their committee "on petitions and memorials," are of opinion that the only proper conclusion deducible from the whole is, that the travelling ministry not only

refuse, as being "inexpedient," but absolutely deny the right of the membership, to claim a representation in the legislative department of the Church, and at the same time, assert a *divine* right of the travelling ministry, to legislate for the whole body, to expound the Scriptures, and administer the details of moral discipline. In fact, they consider themselves to be under special obligation to exercise this unlimited and irresponsible authority, as having been imposed upon them, by the great Head of the Church.

The committee are, therefore, of opinion, that it is proper and necessary, that a General Convention should be assembled, to deliberate upon the course which is now to be pursued by the friends of reform.

In discharging this duty, they think it necessary also to suggest to their friends, the propriety and importance of taking suitable measures for effecting the election of their delegates, and for clothing them with the necessary powers to act; whether the contemplated convention shall determine to organize for an independent existence;—to continue their struggle against these lofty pretensions, or peaceably to surrender their rights and give up all for lost.

In those places where reformers are already associated, whether in the form of Union Societies or otherwise, there can be but little difficulty. Where they are not associated, it is desirable that they should call meetings expressly for the purpose, and when assembled, proceed in due form to elect their representatives, and prepare for them their credentials, which should set forth the facts, that they have been duly elected, and signifying the extent of their delegated powers. If this be done in every instance, whether by Union So-



cieties, associations for purposes of reform, or meetings assembled for elections, then the convention will be prepared to act with understanding and confidence.

The committee wish it to be understood, however, that they in no case advise a separation from the Church, until the sentiments of the reformers generally, can be known, through their respective representatives in the contemplated convention.

In conformity to the trust reposed in us by the convention, for the reasons above stated, we hereby give notice, that another General Convention will be held in the city of Baltimore, in St. John's Church, Liberty street, to begin its session on Wednesday, the 12th day of November next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

By order of the committee,

SAML. K. JENNINGS, *Chairman.*

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

### PERSECUTION, EXPULSIONS AND WITHDRAWALS AT CINCINNATI—AND ALSO AT LYNCHBURG, VA.

AN account of the prosecutions, expulsions, and withdrawal of Reformers at Cincinnati, after the rise of the General Conference of 1828, taken from "an exposition of facts" published in Cincinnati, in pamphlet form, immediately after the expulsions, &c.

Prior to the Gen. Conference of 1828, an address was drawn up by the brethren at Cincinnati, and presented to that body, when in session, reprehending the prosecutions in Baltimore and elsewhere, and requesting the conference

to restore all such members to their former standing; and also, to adopt such measures as would, in future, prevent the recurrence of similar evils. On the evening of the 26th of June, the Union Society of Cincinnati met, and appointed a committee of five members, to receive the report of the General Conference on Petitions and Memorials, and to report thereon. On the 10th of July, the society met to receive the report of their committee. The report was read and adopted, and the following Resolutions were passed.

*Resolved 1.* That we cannot but approve of the conduct of our expelled brethren in Baltimore, in rejecting proposals evidently so partial and unjust, and difficult to be complied with.

*Resolved 2.* That we feel extremely gratified at that degree of peace and prosperity with which they appear to be at present favoured, and we sincerely pray that it may be long continued.

*Resolved 3.* That according to our present feelings and sentiments, we ought, and therefore design to patronize the "Mutual Rights," and to continue the Union Society, until the meeting of the convention in November next; and then to be governed as circumstances may seem to direct.

*Resolved 4.* That in order to prevent unpleasant feelings, we will use our influence with the editors of the above named periodical, not to insert in its pages any matter calculated to excite the effects above stated.

*Resolved 5.* That it is our wish to promote peace and concord; and whatever we can safely surrender to our old side brethren, for peace and quietness sake, we feel disposed to do it. But the liberty of speech, and of the press, with the right to assemble peaceably and

orderly, to discuss Church government, or any other lawful subject we may think proper to take up, is what we cannot relinquish to any human authority whatever.

After the passage of the above resolutions, it was stated by some, high in authority, that the Cincinnati Reformers had passed the Rubicon, and could no longer be tolerated. On the 17th of July, fourteen members of the Union Society were waited on by a prosecuting committee, of the following members: Christopher Smith, Robert Richardson, Sacker Nelson and Littleton Quinton.

On the 25th of July, brother Wm. Young, a local preacher, was served with charges, of which the following is a copy. And notified to appear for trial at the Stone Church, at 9 o'clock, Friday, 14th day of August.

Rev. Wm. Young is charged with endeavouring to sow dissensions in the society or Church, in this station or city, known by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and with the violation of that general rule of the discipline of said Church, which prohibits its members from doing harm, and requires them to avoid evil of every kind; and especially with violating that clause of said general rule, which prohibits speaking evil of ministers.

*Specification 1st.* Because the said William Young, while a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, did heretofore attach himself to, and become a member of the society called the Union Society of the M. E. Church of Cincinnati; which Union Society is in opposition to the Discipline, in whole or in part, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and has arrayed and combined all the workings of the spirit of party in their pernicious and destructive forms, distinguishing its members as organized and systematic opponents of the Church aforesaid.

*Specification 2d.* Because the said William Young as a member of the said Union Society, directly, or indirectly, either by pecuniary contributions or his personal influence, aiding, abetting, co-operating, or assisting in the publication or circulation of a work called "The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," printed in Baltimore,—(for proof of which see Mutual Rights, No. 44, page 230, 2d resolution;) which

periodical work or publication, called "The Mutual Rights," &c., contains among other things much that inveighs against the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, in whole or in part, and is in direct opposition thereto; and that is abusive or speaks evil of a part if not of most of the ministers of that Church; the general tendency of which periodical work has been to produce, and continues to produce disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union among the members of said Church in this city or station.

*Specification 3d.* Because the said William Young, as a member of the Union Society aforesaid, did at a meeting of said society, held on the evening of the 10th of this month, (July,) vote for or otherwise agree to the adoption of the following resolution, viz: "That according to our present feelings and sentiments, we ought, and therefore design, to patronize 'The Mutual Rights,' and to continue the Union Society until the meeting of the convention in November next, and then to be governed as circumstances may seem to direct;" which resolution on account of the licentious manner in which the periodical called "Mutual Rights" has been conducted, and on account of the discord and strife produced by the organization and continuation of a distinct body, within the bosom of the Church, called the "Union Society," is a plain violation of the existing regulations under which we are voluntarily associated as Methodists and as Methodist ministers, and is in opposition to the judgment and advice of the late General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and is well calculated to produce, and increase the disagreement, strife, contention, and breach of union alluded to in the 2d specification. For proof of which, the publication entitled the Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church is referred to, and particularly the following papers.\*

On the following day, the Quarterly Conference met, at which it was determined to appoint a committee of five members to confer with a committee of the Union Society in view of devising a plan of reconciliation; and if no plan of reconciliation could be agreed on, then to devise a plan of separation, and to report to the Church the result of their labours.

\*The passages referred to are the same as those on page 175 of this History.

Several communications passed between the two committees, but no terms of reconciliation could be agreed on. The reformers stated their willingness to abolish their Union Society, reserving, however, to themselves, the right to assemble as a body of reformers at any time for the purpose of transacting such business as, in their opinion, might be proper to promote the cause of reform. And in case of their withdrawing their patronage from the Mutual Rights, which, however, they declined doing for the present, they reserved to themselves the right of publishing their opinions through such other medium as they might deem proper.

To the above proposition, the preachers' committee would not agree, and the negotiations were broken off.

On the Saturday and Monday following, the remaining thirteen members complained of received copies of their charges, Mr. Young having previously been furnished with his. On examination, it appeared they had all been taken from one original copy, and that was formed after the pattern exhibited in Baltimore.

As the prosecutions just commenced were not of a private character, but involving interests and principles dear to every enlightened mind, the trustees determined, that so soon as the charges were delivered to the members complained of, they would call the Church together, for the purpose of obtaining an expression of their sentiments in relation to these proceedings. Accordingly, on Sunday, the 10th of August, the officiating ministers were furnished with notices requiring the attendance of the members at the Stone Church, on the following Wednesday at two o'clock, when business of importance would be submitted for their consideration. In three instances, the preachers refused to read the

notices,—and in another, recalled in the afternoon what had been published in the morning. Notwithstanding the opposition of the stationed preachers, (as they were no doubt aware that a majority of the members would oppose the prosecutions,) at the appointed hour, a very considerable number attended. After the object of the meeting was stated, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1. That the trustees of this station have authority to call the Church together on business in relation thereto, whenever they are of opinion such call is necessary; and such calls we consider legal and valid.

2. That, at such meetings, whatever business is laid before the Church, a majority shall decide thereon, and that decision shall be binding.

3. That, as these prosecutions most clearly involve a violation of that sacred trust committed to us by our forefathers, viz. the liberty of speech and of the press, and as they are contrary to the spirit and genius of our holy religion, unacknowledged by our book of discipline, and highly dangerous to our civil and religious liberties, we hereby express our entire disapprobation of such proceeding.

4. That, from any view we are able to take of these matters, the alleged grounds of complaint are totally insufficient to sustain the charges here preferred.

5. That, forasmuch as some of our accused brethren have required of the preacher in charge an investigation of these complaints before the Church,—and as the preacher has denied that privilege, a privilege which is granted in the discipline of said Church, a right which, from the peculiar and uncommon nature of these charges, is imperiously called for; we hereby declare,

we shall acknowledge no expulsions as valid or legal, where such right has been denied.

6. That we respectfully submit to the preacher in charge the propriety of immediately withdrawing these prosecutions, as the objects for which they were instituted can never be accomplished thereby.

7. That should the preacher in charge reject our counsel and advice, in relation to these prosecutions, we hereby authorize and command our brethren, the trustees of this station, to adopt such measures to enforce a compliance with our wishes, as above stated, as they may judge necessary.

8. That a copy of the resolutions passed by the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this station be presented, by the trustees of said Church, to the Rev. John F. Wright, preacher in charge.

9. That the trustees be required to have the resolutions passed by this meeting recorded in the Church book.

The requisition alluded to in the fifth resolution is contained in the following note, addressed by E. Hall and M. Lyon to the preacher in charge.

*John F. Wright, preacher in charge of the Cincinnati station.*

*Dear Brother,*—We have received the charges which have been preferred against us by brothers Quinton, Richardson, Smith and Nelson. We have now to ask for the privilege granted in our discipline to an accused member, viz. the right of trial before the society of which we are members. We would be glad if you would send us an answer by the bearer.

MOSES LYON,  
E. HALL.

*Cincinnati, Aug. 9, 1828.*



To this Mr. Wright replied:

*Cincinnati, 9th August, 1828.*

*Messrs. Lyon and Hall,*—In answer to your note, I need only say, the privilege you ask for is utterly impracticable. Neither you nor myself possess power to compel members to attend; so that, if such a course should be determined on, nothing is more certain, than that no investigation could be had in the case.

Yours, &c.

J. F. WRIGHT.

To every unprejudiced mind, the fallacy of Mr. Wright's reasoning must be clear and obvious. Why would there be "no investigation in the case?" Did he suppose, that on suitable notice being given, a sufficient number would not attend to consider and decide thereon? This he did not, he could not believe. But he feared the decision would be the very reverse of that which he most ardently desired, and which he had most industriously laboured to produce.

A copy of the above resolutions was presented to Mr. W., accompanied by the following note:

*Cincinnati, August 13th, 1828.*

*Dear Brother,*—We herewith send you a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church of Cincinnati, at a meeting held this day, agreeably to public notice given by the trustees of this station. We request you to inform us, by the bearer, whether you design to act in accordance with the wishes of said Church.

TRUSTEES.

*Rev. John F. Wright.*

To this note Mr. W. replied as follows:

*Cincinnati, August 14th, 1828.*

*To the Trustees:*—In answer to your note, I beg leave to remark, that in my humble opinion, the trus-

tees have exceeded the power vested in them by the law of incorporation, by taking jurisdiction over and interfering with the spiritual concerns of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this station, (as trustees,) inasmuch as their office only contemplates their having control of temporal affairs.

You wish me to say, whether I "design to act in accordance with the wishes of said Church." To which I answer—from the smallness of the number convened together on yesterday, and as I am informed but few voted, I cannot suppose the wish of the Church is yet ascertained; no regular investigation has yet been made, and I feel myself bound, as preacher in charge, to attend to the business as the discipline of our Church directs.

Yours, &c.

J. F. WRIGHT.

The above letter was received on the 14th August, the day appointed for the trial of the local preachers. The following are their names:—David English, Jesse B. Dorman, John Haughton, and William Young. The charges being the same against each individual, Mr. Wright had determined to try those brethren at one and the same time. The committee appointed by the preacher to try the local preachers consisted of Daniel Duvall, John Walls, and John Clark. To each of these the preachers objected, especially to John Clark on account of his deep-rooted prejudices against Reformers in general. Nevertheless, in opposition to the wishes and remonstrances of the accused, Mr. Clark was retained on the committee.

The evidence produced to substantiate the charges, was taken from different parts of the "Mutual Rights." The "prosecuting committee" commenced by reading detached parts from sundry articles in that periodical.

To this the accused objected, forasmuch as the writer's design and object could not be clearly seen. They therefore contended, that the whole of each paper should be read on which the charges were founded. But this was objected to by the prosecuting committee; alleging, if we remember right, that it would take up too much time. Mr. Clark also made the same objection, and observed that he did not come there to be detained two or three days, *as his corn and his hay, &c., needed his attention.* And from his conduct on that day, it is highly probable, that these were of much more importance to him than the character and standing of his deeply injured brethren.

About four or perhaps five o'clock, P. M., the evidence on the part of the prosecution closed; when three of the accused made their defence. They dwelt at considerable length on the great impropriety and injustice of making them accountable for the writings of other men, and those men travelling preachers, and within reach of the authorities of the Church; that the point in dispute was not of a private or personal character, and could never be settled by prosecutions; that neither in the discipline, nor in the Word of God, are those things forbidden for which they contend; and that no where are Union Societies, or periodicals on our Church government, prohibited. As it respected Bro. Dorman, he had never patronized the "Mutual Rights," as he had been furnished with the use of it by an old side brother.

After the accused had made their defence, they, with the spectators, retired from the house, followed by Mr. Duvall. In some conversation which immediately took place, the old gentleman remarked, that he did not be-

lieve the brethren had done any harm; that he had done as much himself.

The committee retired to their homes for the night, and in the morning, as was expected, declared the accused guilty of the charges preferred against them. They were accordingly suspended from all official acts in the Church until the meeting of the adjourned Quarterly Conference.

The day appointed for the trial of the ten lay members was the 15th August, the day following the trial of the local preachers. After Mr. Wright had opened the prosecution, the accused members rose from their seats, and brother Hall, as their spokesman, read the following note:

As accused members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Cincinnati, we claim the privileges granted us in the fifth restrictive rule of the discipline of our Church, in the following words, to wit—"neither shall they," the General Conference, "do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society, or by a committee, and of an appeal."

We do therefore protest against being tried before a committee, or select number of said Church, contrary to our wishes or consent; and we do hereby notify you, that we will not submit to any decision in our cases, unless such decision shall be made by the society of which we are members.

Signed, E. Hall, W. L. Chappell, H. Handy, S. Ashley, T. Wright, James Foster, M. Lyon, J. Snyder, J. Garretson, G. Lee.

Mr. Wright refused to grant any such privilege, and they retired from the house. The committee and Mr.

Wright proceeded with the sham trials, and found the members all guilty of the preferred charges.

Some short time after the trials the preacher addressed the following note to the condemned members. The copy is from that sent to bro. Hall.

*Cincinnati, August 18, 1828.*

*Brother Hall.*—I take this method of discharging the painful duty of administering reproof, which devolves upon me on account of my present situation.

You have been convicted of endeavouring to sow dissensions in the society or Church of which you are a member, by a decision of the committee appointed to investigate the charges preferred against you.

You, therefore, plainly discover, that the only ground on which expulsion from the Church can be avoided, is, an abandonment of the course which you have for some time past pursued, and which according to the judgment of your brethren of the committee, is calculated to produce disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union among the members of our Church.

As you are the arbiter of your own destiny in this matter, I hope you will inform me in writing, by Wednesday evening next, if you should feel disposed to comply with the above condition.

Yours, &c.

JOHN F. WRIGHT.

As no notice was taken of the preachers' communication, the brethren were considered as expelled from the Church.

While Mr. Wright was thus in pursuit of his prosecuting measures, the trustees held frequent consultations on what course to pursue. By the best legal authorities the city could afford, they were informed that they could compel Mr. Wright to grant the lay members

a hearing before the Church, or in case of refusal, by a writ of *mandamus*, commit him to jail. But the resort to civil law, was revolting to all the brethren, and they declined the measure. Something, however, was necessary to be done immediately, as reports were in circulation, that at a preceding meeting a number of names had been taken down for the purpose of prosecution. This number was said to be thirty, and all members of the Union Society. The trustees, some of whom witnessed the former prosecutions, determined that no more sacrifices should thus be offered up to appease their angry and persecuting brethren. On the 16th of August, early in the day, they met together to consult on these important subjects. That was a time of deep affliction. After much consultation, it was recommended, that "forasmuch as no peace can be enjoyed in the Church, reformers, in a body, had better withdraw." It was therefore determined, that on Monday, the 18th of August, the reformers and their friends should meet at the Stone Church, at 2 o'clock, P. M., for the purpose of formally withdrawing from the Church. On the following day (Sunday) notices were furnished to the officiating ministers, requiring reformers and their friends to meet at the Stone Church, at 2 o'clock, P. M., the following day. Agreeably with this notice, at the time appointed, a considerable number of reformers and their friends repaired to the Church. After the meeting was duly opened, and the object clearly stated, about two hundred and forty gave in their names for the purpose and with the design of formally withdrawing from the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the following instrument, they gave the reasons for this procedure.

*Cincinnati, 18th August, 1828.*

*Sir,*—We have beheld with unfeigned sorrow and regret, the proceedings lately had against our brethren, by way of distinction called Reformers, in this city. These proceedings, we are compelled to say, are distinguished by cruelty and oppression in their most afflicting forms. You, sir, are not ignorant that the Church in this station expressed, at a public meeting, called by the trustees for that purpose, their entire disapprobation of these prosecuting measures. You have also been advised not to proceed, and forewarned of the awful consequences, by brethren whose judgment and opinions it was your duty to respect. Nevertheless, led on and assisted by a set of men, some of whom are remarkable for their ignorance, others for their deep-rooted prejudices, and some by tempers of the most inflammatory character, you have summoned a number of our brethren before a partial tribunal, prepared to do the direful deed; and thus, by the most unjustifiable measures, you have procured the condemnation of our brethren, whose characters stand fair before both the Church and the world. In these proceedings, you must be aware, you can neither be sustained by the discipline of our Church, nor by the laws of our country. By an appeal to that tribunal, we can compel you to accede to the reasonable request of our brethren. Alas! we lament to prove that civil law alone will induce any Methodist preacher to accede to what religion and justice require. Oh! “tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon,” lest the uncircumcised, the enemies of Christianity, triumph. But unwilling to avail ourselves of the advantages we thus possess, we have determined to secede, and leave our brethren in the quiet possession of



our sanctuary—our home, for peace and quietness sake, and seek a place where a watchful Providence shall direct our way. We therefore, request of you, forthwith, certificates of our good standing and character,—and pray that you, and your associates in these unhal-  
lowed prosecutions, may find mercy in the day of the Lord Jesus.

*Rev. John F. Wright.*

---

We now return to the local preachers. The former court could only suspend them. Their proper trials came on at the sitting of the Quarterly Conference. Here there could be no chance for justice as almost all the reforming leaders had been removed, some by expulsion, and others had seceded, so that but few were left to oppose Mr. Wright's arbitrary measures. It is here unnecessary to say more than that the Quarterly Conference confirmed the decision of the committee, and they were expelled.

The following note contains the decision of the Quarterly Conference against the preachers.

*Dear Brother,*—The conference have made it my duty to inform you of their decision. They have found you guilty of the charge, with its several specifications; and have passed a resolution, that if you promise to desist from the course in future, for which they censure you, viz. that you withdraw from the Union Society, and that you cease to patronize the Mutual Rights, that you retain your standing in the Church.

Yours affectionately,

G. R. JONES, *Pres't.*

*Bro. W. Young.*

The reader will distinctly perceive, that the sole ground of complaint was patronizing the Mutual Rights,

and being a member of the Union Society. To this note Bro. Young sent the following reply:

*Dear Brother,*—As it respects the decision of the conference in my case, which you gave me last evening, which informed me that they considered me guilty of the charges preferred against me, I expected nothing else, from a belief that the committee of local preachers, and a majority of the Quarterly Conference, were selected with an eye to this decision.

Concerning the proposition made to me by the conference, viz. to withdraw from the Union Society, and cease to patronize the Mutual Rights, I have only to say, I shall reserve to myself the right to patronize and read such books as my judgment shall from time to time direct; and for the matter contained therein, I shall endeavour at all times to pass judgment with a reference to the rule of right. I shall continue to think it a right belonging to me to converse with my brethren, in society meetings or otherwise, on the subject of Church government, or any other lawful subject.

I have now to say, that I consider the proceedings in my case to be illegal, and the decision unjust, and from it I shall appeal to the Annual Conference.

I remain yours,

WM. YOUNG.

The brethren accordingly appealed to the Annual Conference. But as might have been expected, that body confirmed the decision of the Quarterly Conference.

The seceding brethren and their friends now destitute of a place of worship, were kindly accommodated by the members of the Second Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches, and were regularly favoured with the administration of the Word of Life by their beloved brethren

Truman Bishop, John Price and others, and the divine blessing descended on their assemblies. The praiseworthy conduct of Dr. Bishop, however, gave great offence to the presiding elder, G. R. Jones, who informed him, by letter, that he would bring charges against him on this ground at the approaching Annual Conference. The charges were accordingly made at the conference, but were not considered as grounds of just complaint against brother Bishop. The conference however requested him, by a vote, not to preach to those persons in Cincinnati who had on account of the late proceedings seceded from the Church. In this act brother Bishop saw there was a fatal snare laid to entrap him; and that he must either withdraw from under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, violate his conscience by refusing to preach to his seceding friends, or render himself liable to trial—suspension and expulsion. On his return to Cincinnati, he addressed the following letter to Mr. Wright, withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and took charge of the reformers society.

*To the Rev. John F. Wright.*

*Dear Brother,*—After much reflection, many tears and many prayers to Almighty God for direction, I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. And I hereby tender to you, and through you to Bro. G. R. Jones, as the proper organs, a resignation of my membership in said Church, and shall, from this date, consider myself no longer accountable to the discipline and authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was not my design or wish ever to have dissolved my connexion with a Church, for whose welfare I have

felt a deep interest, and have laboured to the best of my ability for thirty years; but I expected to have lived and died within her pale. But the vote of the conference, prohibiting me from preaching to the seceded brethren in this city, imposes a requisition with which I cannot comply as a conscientious man, and it involves a principle I cannot admit. I never can subscribe to the right of any man, or body of men, authoritatively to say to any minister, called of God to preach the Gospel to dying men; You must not preach to any congregation of immortal souls who are probationers or candidates for eternal happiness or woe. I must be at liberty to follow the dictates of my own conscience in fulfilling the commission given to me by the Great Head of the Church: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature;" because I know I must give an account to Him for myself in the great day. I believe it is the will of God that I should preach to those seceders in this city,—but the conference forbids it; for although the vote was in the form of a request, yet it being a formal vote of the conference, and made a matter of record on the journals, it amounts to an official prohibition; so that I am driven to the necessity of withdrawing from the Church, or violating my conscience. And whether it be right to obey God or men, judge ye. In this matter I am not left to choose as in a matter of judgment, but of conscience. Hence my brethren have compelled me to resign my standing in the Church, which I suppose is what some of them designed to accomplish; and it may be pleasure to them, but it is painful to me. It is to my wounded soul like cutting off a right arm, or plucking out a right eye. But from a conviction of duty I must do it. I do not take this step

from any hostile feeling, or from the dictates of any unhallowed passion; my feelings are of a very different nature. No one circumstance of my life has ever caused me more heartfelt grief, than that in which the conference has placed me by the above vote. I am frequently led involuntarily to exclaim, Why did my brethren do so? Surely if they had known the torture they were about to inflict on my already lacerated and bleeding heart, they would not have done it. Although the Church has had many much more able ministers, a truer or more sincere friend she never held within her pale. I have been in that Church, I may say, from childhood; but I now go out like the old servant of God, not knowing whither he went. But I lean on the Divine Arm, and trust the Lord will lead and support me.

Contrary to my former calculations or intention, I now retire from under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (which is near and dear to me,) for the reason already stated, that the command of the conference and the command of Jesus Christ given to me, stand in direct opposition to each other. Christ says, Preach the Gospel to every creature. The conference says, Preach not the Gospel to those hundreds of souls in Cincinnati, who have seceded from the Church. So that I cannot obey one, without violating the other. And if I disobey the command of the conference, in obeying the command of Christ, I subject myself to trial—suspension and expulsion, which I have reason to believe would be carried into execution; and I do not wish any further affliction of this kind. And if I disobey the command of Christ, in obeying the command of the conference, I shall endanger my eternal salvation. Under these circumstances, I dare not confer with flesh

and blood; I must, therefore, stand free to obey the Great Head of the Church, and leave the event with Him.

Yours in deep affection,

T. BISHOP.

#### EXPULSIONS AND WITHDRAWALS AT LYNCHBURG.

*Communication from Lynchburg, Va. to the Editor of the Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer.*

REV. D. B. DORSEY :

Lynchburg, October 18, 1828.

*Dear Sir,*—The most cogent arguments that can be advanced by the friends of Reform, in support of the principles which they advocate, are feeble when compared with their demonstrative facts with which our opponents furnish us. The principles of the Methodist government had not been developed until within the past year. It begun with you, and each subsequent move, more clearly tends to hold them out to public view: and in proportion as they are felt and seen, the cause of reform is advanced; such I am happy to say is the result in this place. In your last paper you noticed the meeting of the friends of reform in Lynchburg and published their resolutions, which follow :

1st. *Be it therefore Resolved*, That this meeting deem it expedient that they should be represented in the General Convention to be holden in the city of Baltimore, on the 12th of November next, to deliberate on measures of importance to the great interest of Methodist Reformers: and that they will be regulated, in any ultimate measures they may adopt, by the advice of that body.

2d. That we deeply sympathize with our reforming brethren in Baltimore and elsewhere, who have suffered from the potent energy of the irresponsible power which our discipline vests in the itinerant ministry: and that we

tender our affectionate regards, to our former highly esteemed townsman, the Rev. S. K. Jennings, and his colleagues in the editorial department of the "Mutual Rights," for the high and disinterested sacrifices made in defence of christian liberty.

3d. That we approve of the determination to keep up the publication of a paper in which the subject of Church government will be freely discussed, and that we will patronize, and recommend to the patronage of others, the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer."

4th, *and lastly*, That we most *earnestly and affectionately* recommend to our reforming brethren, the cultivation and exercise of those christian graces, which alone will enable them to bear with patience and fortitude, the proscription, persecution and expulsion, with which their infatuated opposing brethren threaten them. That we be devoutly engaged in prayer to *Almighty God*, for the sanctifying influences of his grace, and the shedding forth of that love; which will enable us to pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us.

Our proceedings were speedily followed by citations, to answer before a committee, for "endeavouring to sow dissensions in our Church, by enveighing against its discipline." The "specification;" because they constituted an inflammatory meeting, on the evening of the 18th of September, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, that adopted and published in the Lynchburg Virginian, a certain preamble and resolutions, signed C. Winfree, chairman, and John Victor, secretary, of an inflammatory character.

This meeting was attended by a large number of our most respectable citizens, and in whatever point of view



it may be regarded by our opposing brethren, we have the united testimony of a disinterested and intelligent public, to sustain us in saying, that it was conducted in an orderly, respectful and dignified manner; as to the character of the meeting, however, the committee did not express an opinion. The character and tendency of the preamble and resolutions, were the ostensible ground on which they sustained the charge and specification; and that for the expression of their sentiments, on a subject of mere human policy and convenience were two local preachers and nine lay members, stewards, leaders, and exhorters cut off from the communion of the Church.

The decision of the committee was, of course, sustained by the Quarterly Meeting Conference.

Such has been the influence of their measures that although we had considered our number but small, we now find that we are surrounded by a host of warm and fast friends of reform. The females assembled and addressed a letter to the preacher in charge, a copy of which I send you signed by thirty-seven members. Since then there have been other secessions, male and female; so that we now number sixty two members, who on the 13th inst. formed themselves into a society, adopting an article of association, and receiving the Rev. William J. Holcombe, and John Percival, as licensed preachers,—appointed stewards and leaders and formed three classes. A subscription paper was opened for the purpose of erecting a house of worship, and in this day upwards of two thousand dollars is subscribed for that purpose. In the mean time the houses of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Baptist denominations are open for our accommodation. Brother Holcombe

preached on last sabbath at eleven o'clock in the Baptist Church. The Episcopalian will be occupied by us on next sabbath, at the same hour, and the Presbyterian at night. Our cause is advancing daily. A number of our Methodist brethren are looking with anxiety to the convention, and should it be determined to establish an independent Church, and the foundation be well laid, we calculate on a very large addition to our communion. May the Great Head of the Church inspire us with wisdom commensurate with this important business. Our meetings are well attended; much love and union prevail, and the members seem to enjoy the life and power of religion. We will bear with patience the opposition and hard sayings of the opposing brethren, nor will we return railing for railing.

Yours, in much love and esteem,

J. VICTOR.

---

## CHAPTER XV.

GENERAL CONVENTION OF 1828.—REPLY TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE PAPER IN ANSWER TO THE PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS.—ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION.

*Abstract from the Journal of the General Convention of Reformers, held in the city of Baltimore, Nov. 12th to the 22d, 1828.*

THE States represented in the Convention, were, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Alabama, New Jersey and the District of Columbia. The

whole number of delegates elected was one hundred and twelve, nearly all of whom were in attendance. Rev. Nicholas Snethen was chosen President and William S. Stockton appointed Secretary.

The report of the late General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in reply to the memorial of the Convention of 1827, was taken up, read and referred to a committee of five members, to prepare an answer, and to recommend such other measures in relation to its disposal, as the committee might deem advisable. The following named members constituted the committee: Gideon Davis, Georgetown, D. C.; Dr. Thomas Dunn, Philadelphia; James Towler, Ohio; P. B. Hopper, Maryland; Dr. John French, Virginia.

A committee was also appointed to prepare a system of government for the organization of those Methodist reformers who might be disposed to embrace its provisions, and unite on safe and equitable principles.

The following persons constituted the committee: Rev. Dr. Samuel K. Jennings, Baltimore; Rev. W. H. Coman, Virginia; Rev. Dr. Wm. B. Elgin, Tennessee; Rev. Wm. Young, Ohio; Rev. N. Snethen, Maryland; Mr. William S. Stockton, Philadelphia; Mr. Wm. C. Lipscomb, Georgetown; Spear Whitaker, Esq., North Carolina; and Mr. John Victor, Lynchburg, Va.

*Monday, Nov. 17th.*

Brother G. Davis, from the committee to whom was referred the report of the General Conference, stated that the committee were ready to report. And, on motion, the report was read, as follows:

The committee to whom was referred the report of the committee of the General Conference, in answer to the petition of Reformers in the Methodist Episcopal

Church: having examined the same with much care and attention, offer the following report :

In order to a proper understanding of the subject, it was deemed necessary to refer to the memorial prepared by a Convention of Reformers, which was held in this city, the 15th November last, (1827;) that document being more particularly alluded to, in the report under consideration; from which we ascertained that four distinct objects were presented to the consideration of the General Conference. A lay representation in the law-making department of the Church,—a modification of the rule respecting “endeavouring to sow dissensions,”—an alteration in the mode of trying members, so as to secure to them the right of a fair trial; and lastly, to vest in the Annual Conferences, the right of electing their own presiding elders. Two of these points only, the two first, were noticed by the General Conference. Why the others were not, we will not presume to offer a conjecture.

It is due to the importance of the subject to say, that our minds have been arrested and most solemnly impressed with some of the sentiments contained in the report referred to us; a candid examination of which, must awaken in the minds of every unprejudiced individual, the most alarming reflections and forebodings.

Whilst a representation in the General Conference was opposed by those in power, on the ground of expediency alone, we had no cause to fear the consequences of their uncontrolled prerogatives, as such a defence was an acknowledgment in fact, that the modifications asked for would be granted, when the voice of the Church should demand it. But the sentiments avowed by the last General Conference, assumes so much the

air of infallibility on their part, if we understand the terms they use, that the local preachers, and the laity, must be considered as sinning highly, to oppose their decisions, whatever they may be.

That we do not err in this matter, we think it will be plainly seen by the following quotations from this very extraordinary document: "The great Head of the Church himself, has imposed on *us* the duty of preaching the Gospel, of administering its ordinances and of maintaining its moral discipline among those over whom the Holy Ghost in these respects has made us overseers. Of these also, viz: of Gospel doctrines, ordinances, and moral discipline, we do believe, that the divinely instituted ministry are the divinely authorized expounders: and that the duty of maintaining them in their purity, and of not permitting our ministration in these respects to be authoritatively controlled by others, does rest upon us with the force of a moral obligation."\* And in the next paragraph, it is declared,—“we arrogate no authority to *enact* any law of our own, either of moral or of civil force. We claim no strictly legislative powers: although we grant, that the term legislature and legislative, have been sometimes used even among ourselves. In a proper sense however, they are not strictly applicable to our General Conference.”

\*It is worthy of special notice, that the above claim of the American General Conference to *unlimited divine authority*, to decide on what doctrines shall be taught—on what ordinances shall be instituted, and what moral discipline shall be exercised in the Church of Christ, exclusive of the laity, was seized upon with avidity, by the British Conference of 1828, and adopted, as the true principle by which ministers of the Gospel should govern the Church of Christ in all ages and in all parts of the world. See page 47 of this History.

These extraordinary sentiments being advanced in answer to a memorial of the local preachers and lay members, for only a moderate share in the enactment of those rules and regulations by which they are governed, it must be apparent to every one, that our itinerant ministers claim a divine and exclusive right to govern the Church according to their own views: a right which is not contended for by the ministers of any other Church in the protestant world.

This opinion has not been formed in haste, but after the most mature reflection. It will not be denied, we presume, that the phrase, "divinely instituted ministry," is used as synonymous with and intended to apply particularly to, the itinerant ministry; it can mean nothing else.

The last sentence of the quotation when first read, having excited in our minds a considerable degree of astonishment, we have deemed it proper to notice it out of its regular order. "We arrogate no authority to enact any laws of our own, either of moral or of *civil* force. We claim no strictly legislative powers." This we confess, is as new as it is surprising, and affords additional proof that we live in an age of *improvement*.

Our discipline, however, says, "The General Conference shall have *full powers to make* rules and regulations for our Church;" under which authority, it has uniformly acted, and the "rules and regulations" thus formed, have always had and still have, the binding effect of laws, as much so as the laws of any community. And yet our brethren say, they have no "strictly legislative powers." There is but one meaning, therefore, that can be given to their present claim, which is, that the Great Head of the Church, in giving a code of

laws, both moral and judicial, conferred upon the itinerant preachers divine authority to expound them, and, under the sanction of a "moral obligation," to enforce their own decisions. If this be a fair interpretation, which we think cannot be doubted, the prerogatives now assumed, being of a judicial character, are more dangerous by far to christian liberty, than the right to legislate without responsibility. The General Conference, therefore, in attempting to escape from what they themselves *appear* to have considered objectionable and dangerous, (the power to legislate for those who are not represented) have claimed powers no less at war with the practice of the Apostles and early christian ministers than they are with all those feelings which characterize us, as American republicans and enlightened christians.

We will next call your attention to that part of the report in which our itinerant brethren declare themselves to be divinely authorized to ordain what are "Gospel doctrines and ordinance," and what is "moral discipline," and consequently to fix a standard of faith, and rules of practice in all their variety of form and modification.

As the reformers have not in any respect, controverted the present doctrines of the Church, nor any of its rules for the promotion of piety and morality, we should have considered it useless to say a word on this subject, if it were not necessary to shew, that such prerogatives are highly dangerous, and that they lead to an entire, unlimited control, over the conscience and judgment of every individual under the pastoral care of the itinerant ministry.

If they really possess, by divine right, these powers, they may ordain their own infallibility to be a "Gospel



doctrine," and that all their decisions must be according to truth. They may ordain, that those passages "let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things," and "the workman is worthy of his meat," mean, that every member shall give a tithe of his substance for the support of the ministry. They may decide, that the sacraments of "confirmation, penance and extreme unction," are duties which must be attended to. They may prescribe a rule of civil and political conduct for the members; and ordain that a non-compliance with any of these injunctions, shall constitute an offence requiring the exercise of "moral discipline." They may place the property of the Church (have they not already done so?) under their own control, though built by the people for their own benefit; and in short, they may do any thing and every thing, which their own judgments, or even caprice may suggest: all which, the local preachers and lay members are bound to believe and obey, at the risk of their eternal welfare: for it would be an absurdity to say, that the people have a right to refuse obedience to their authority, if it be of divine origin.

We have the evidence of history for saying, that an older Church than ours, (using that term in a familiar sense) was corrupted by an improper exercise of the powers, now for the first time claimed by the Methodist itinerant ministry. But how far they will follow this example, or with what pace they will travel into those errors and improprieties which brought about this melancholy state of the Church, is beyond the ken of mortals; but if we may be permitted to draw conclusions from that kind of philosophy which "teaches by example," so sure as the time to fulfil prophecy must

arrive—so sure as every effect must be produced by a cause—so sure in our opinion, must the Methodist ministry degenerate, if they are permitted to exercise the powers which they now hold, and with which they declare themselves to be vested by divine appointment:—powers so contrary to reason, and so hostile to those opinions which have for centuries been the glory of Protestants, that nothing short of the most unequivocal language of Scripture should have induced any body of men to lay claim to them.

We do not wish to be misunderstood on this point. We mean then, that where the ministry are vested with great power in any Church, allurements are held out to seek clerical employment therein, from motives of ambition and love of control;—the natural tendency of which is, to jeopardize the best interests of the Church of Christ, lower the Gospel standard of ministerial piety, and introduce into its general administration, either laxity or oppression, as interest or ambition may suggest. For in the language of a late distinguished Methodist preacher, “as the prerogatives of the laity were diminished, and priestly assumption succeeded, corruption of christianity obtained.” That our itinerant brethren, have no “intention or desire” to bring about such unfavourable results, we charitably hope; they can, however, only speak for themselves. They know not what may be the views of those who may come after them: and in any event, our argument is, “that the powers claimed and exercised by them, must in their very nature, and from the inevitable connexions of causes and effects, tend gradually perhaps, yet not less uncontrollably, to the results which we have mentioned. For, as expressed by the Rev. John Emory, Beverly

Waugh, Gerard Morgan and Alfred Griffith, we should "remember the tenacious grasp with which power is held when once acquired. Its march is ever onward, and its tremendous tendency is to accumulation." And as we are acting, "not only for the present age, but for posterity," we should entreat our brethren, both ministers and laymen, to look with calmness and candour to the influence, with which these "tremendous" powers may have upon them and the Church, "and to the aspects with which they will be exhibited upon the page of future history," if supported and encouraged much longer.

These being some of the dangerous consequences of clerical domination, we may fairly infer that it cannot be of divine appointment. But we are not left to our own imperfect reasonings upon this interesting subject. We have the light of revelation, which has conducted us to conclusions very different from those of the General Conference.

The first christian assembly ever held to decide upon points of religious duty and belief, is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and we have the authority of ecclesiastical history, as well as Mr. Wesley and Mr. Benson, in their commentaries, for saying, that that conference or council, was composed of both ministers and people. And we have the further authority of the former for saying, that, "in those early times, every Christian Church consisted of the people, their leaders and the ministers. The *people* were undoubtedly the first in authority: for the Apostles shewed by their own example, that nothing of moment was to be determined without the consent of the assembly," who enforced "moral discipline" by excommunicating "profligate and

unworthy members, and restored penitents to their forfeited privileges."

Is it not, therefore, more rational to conclude that the form of Church government just referred to, being approved of and sanctioned by the example of the Apostles, should be esteemed of divine institution, than that a part of the ministry alone, should be considered divinely authorized to act in their own right for the whole Church, in opposition to apostolic example? Our right, therefore, to representation, though not "*acquired* in consequence of our becoming christians," is clearly "*illustrated and enforced by the Sacred Scriptures,*" of which we cannot divest ourselves by becoming Methodists. This is sufficient for our present purpose, without attempting to prove that we have this right by the laws of nature.

The question of expediency might be argued at much length; but on the present occasion, it is not considered necessary to do so, but merely to submit a few reflections, which we think will be sufficient to place this subject in a proper point of view.

We have proved we think, that the local preachers and laity, have a right to representation. Our first reflection therefore is, that it was not expedient to deprive them of the exercise of this right; because, in the first place, withholding representation must have the inevitable tendency of creating dissatisfaction in the minds of those who believe that they have this right: and secondly, because the granting it would have the effect of strengthening the itinerant system, the opinion of the General Conference to the contrary notwithstanding.

It is universally admitted by the people, that their spiritual good is promoted by the itinerant system, and

they have no temptations to induce them to desire its destruction; which cannot be said of the travelling preachers, who, independent of other considerations, may have strong inducements of a domestic kind, to do so. We consider this part of our system highly important, if not absolutely "essential to the accomplishment of the great original design of the economy of Methodism, to spread scriptural holiness over these and other lands;" and upon its continuance, we believe the prosperity of the Church very much depends. So far therefore, from there being any danger to be apprehended in this respect, by a participation of the people in the government of the Church, we believe its continuance depends in a great measure upon their having a voice in its legislative councils. It is a point pretty generally conceded, that not a great number of our preachers are, and have been well qualified for permanent stations; and this may be the reason why no attempt has yet been made to do away this feature of our polity. But we know not what may happen in the course of time, when the General Conference in the plenitude of its powers and influence, shall patronize collegiate education, and a majority of those thus educated shall come into power, what changes in the itinerating system may take place, unless the laity shall have a voice to prevent them; for as before observed, we do believe there is more danger in this respect from the itinerant preachers, than from the people.

A brief notice of the claim of the itinerant ministry to be the "divinely authorized expounders" of "moral discipline," the enforcement of which they will not permit to be "authoritatively controlled by others," will, it is to be hoped, be sufficient. This we consider

to be the most dangerous doctrine in the report; and its natural results, either oppression, or favoritism. In opposing it, however, we can confidently say, that the truths of revelation are the "weapons of our warfare;" and wherever the gospel is believed, they will prevail over all claim of clerical right to rule. Were the claims of our brethren once admitted by the members to be correct, the necessary consequences must be obvious to every observer. Instead of the Word of God being the rule of their lives, they must submit implicitly to the decisions of their spiritual teachers, however adverse they might be to their own judgments of right and wrong. The propagation of those principles, and the submission to them, were the original and prolific source of that moral darkness, which for ages spread desolation over the intellectual world.

That the ministry are not divinely vested with any such powers, we think most certain; but on the contrary, it is evident, that the right to excommunicate, or otherwise punish for immorality, is vested in the Church, and *not* in the ministry alone. In order to prove the correctness of this opinion, it is only necessary to refer to a single passage of Scripture. It is to be found in the 5th chapter of 1st Corinthians, 11th, 12th and 13th verses.

In these verses, St. Paul, acting under divine inspiration as an Apostle, informs the Corinthian Church, (not its ministers alone,) that it was their duty not to keep company with wicked and profane persons, and to excommunicate them from their society. This instruction was not given to that Church only, but intended as a rule of conduct for the members of the Church of Christ, in all future ages, both personal and official; and in relation to the punishment of two persons, who it appears

had acted wickedly, one a member of the Church, the other not, he remarks, "What have I to do, to judge them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? Therefore, put away from among yourselves these wicked persons." Upon this passage Dr. Clarke makes the following paraphrase; "Pass ye sentence on them which are within, which are members of the Church. Those which are without, which are not members of the Church, God will pass sentence on, in that way in which he generally deals with the heathen world. But put you away the evil from among yourselves."

From this short and imperfect view, it has we hope been satisfactorily shewn, that the General Conference have committed a great error in supposing that the "divinely instituted ministry" have a divine right to exclusive government in the Church.

And here we would add a few remarks, to prove the unsoundness of their views, by their legitimate and necessary consequences. First, if their opinions be correct, the local preachers are not a part of the "divinely instituted ministry" or our travelling preachers must be inexcusable for keeping them from the enjoyment and exercise of their rightful prerogatives and responsibilities, which, it is said, "rests upon the divinely instituted ministry with the force of a moral obligation." And, secondly, as the ministers of no other Protestant Church have assumed these powers, *they* must be considered entirely out of the pale of the "divinely instituted ministry," or to have been most shamefully negligent in not attending to those duties which are said to be imposed on them "with the force of a moral obligation."

A single remark appears to be sufficient in relation to "the privileges and advantages" of the local preachers,



which the report says, "have much rather exceeded than fallen short of what was contemplated in their institution." What are their "privileges and advantages?" They may be summed up in a few words. They have the privilege of preaching for nothing, and of supporting themselves by their daily labour; and further, whilst they contribute the means for the support of the gospel, they frequently fill appointments for which the itinerant preachers are paid; and all the seals to their ministry are placed to the credit of the preacher in charge, and his colleague, (if he have one) at the conference. These are their advantages; these are their privileges. We would then appeal to the justice and common sense of the community.—Do these privileges *equal*, much less *exceed*, what they are justly entitled to, when it is known they planted the first seed of Methodism in America, and have always been, not only the active but the efficient coadjutors of the itinerant ministers, in "spreading Scripture holiness over these and other lands?"

However painful it may be, duty requires that we should notice a subject, which has been so repeatedly forced upon the public attention, and with such appearance of confidence as to have acquired strength by its repetition. We mean the assertion that "our present economy bears with peculiar severity upon the personal and domestic comforts of the itinerant ministry." So far from this being the case, we are confirmed in the opinion from long observation, that the personal situation of our itinerant brethren, with but few exceptions, is much improved in their "domestic comforts" and associations, by entering the travelling connexion.

In concluding this report, we cannot but express our surprise that the General Conference after having called upon the reformers to shew the right of the local preachers and lay members, to representation in that body, and "to prove that this right is conferred by the Holy Scriptures," should themselves have laid claim to a divine right to exclusive and unlimited government, without attempting to support it by a single passage of Scripture, or the least authority from ecclesiastical history. If they had shown their authority from revelation, it would have put an end to all strife. We would have confessed our error and submitted with cheerfulness; but this they have not even attempted. But instead of this, under their assumed right to expound the Scriptures, they have declared what are *their rights* and what are *our duties*. But we cannot in conscience admit the correctness of their claims, nor recommend the reformers to abandon the prosecution of an object, which we consider of vital importance to the future welfare of the Church. Yet whilst we would exhort them to prosecute with zeal and firmness their claims to representation, we would at the same time entreat them, in their exertions, to "let their moderation be known to all men."

GIDEON DAVIS, *Chairman*.

We will here take occasion to offer a remark or two on a part of the reply of the General Conference, that appears to have been overlooked by the committee who prepared the above excellent paper. In the latter part of the reply, the members of the General Conference say; "We know that we have been charged with wishing to suppress free inquiry, and with denying to our ministers and members the liberty of speech and of the press"—"But the charge we wholly disavow. Our

ministers and members, of every class, are entitled to the full liberty of speech and of the press with any other citizens of the United States." This is a most extraordinary declaration; and, when viewed in connexion with the *conditions* on which the conference proposed to restore the expelled brethren, and the acts of several of the members of the General Conference, in expelling members for the use of the press, we are compelled to withhold our confidence in the *sincerity* of the declaration. One of the conditions of restoration was, that "*no other periodical* be devoted to the *same controversy*." Was there no "wish here to *suppress* free inquiry" into the propriety and necessity of lay representation on the part of the General Conference? Was there not rather, a *studied design* to *suppress* investigation and *silence* all future inquiry on this momentous subject, by *pledging* the restored ministers and members to dissolve the Union Societies and give up their liberty of the press?

But let us look at the previous *conduct* of some of the members of the General Conference. The Baltimore Annual Conference delegates voted for this extraordinary declaration as their *deliberate* sentiments, when they actually had, in their own conference, punished Rev. D. B. Dorsey, because he would *not promise* to desist from recommending a work which contained essays, in opposition to the government of their Church. Mr. Roszel's resolution, by which Mr. Dorsey was punished, has nothing in it concerning "unchristian railing and violence," which, by the way, the General Conference say is the sole object against which the gag-law is leveled, but required that Mr. Dorsey "*promise* the conference that he will *desist* from taking any agency

in spreading or supporting *any publications in opposition* to our discipline or government." Yet this brother and his colleagues, voted in favour of the *disavowal* of the charge that the itinerant ministers wish to suppress free inquiry, and of the extraordinary assertion that "the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of every class, are entitled to the full liberty of speech and of the press, equally with any other citizen of the United States!!" The same remarks may be made in relation to the *Virginia* delegates, who declared that Benton Fields' conduct was not mal-administration.

But furthermore, how was this disavowal carried out in future practice? Why, in the following August, four preachers and ten members were expelled in Cincinnati for taking and reading the Mutual Rights!

*Tuesday, Nov. 18th.*

Brother Whitaker, from the committee of nine, upon organization, (the chairman not being present) presented the Report of said committee, which, by order of the Convention, was taken up and read.

It was then, *Resolved*, That the Report be printed for the use of the Convention.

Brother G. Davis offered the following preamble and resolution: Whereas, certain resolutions were passed by the last General Conference, with a professed design to restore to the communion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, certain persons who had been excluded said communion, on account of their belonging to Union Societies, and for patronizing the Mutual Rights; and *whereas*, certain Methodist Reformers in the city of Baltimore and elsewhere, who were thus interdicted said communion, and for whose restoration said resolutions were professedly adopted, have refused to accept the

terms therein contained: therefore, *Resolved*, That this Convention consider the terms of said resolutions to be such as they could not accept, and retain an honourable and Christian standing among their brethren; and, that they approve of their course in this respect, as a favourable illustration of their adherence to just principles, equally honourable to themselves and the cause in which they have suffered. Adopted.

*Wednesday, Nov. 19th.*

The report of the committee on organization laid on the table yesterday, to be printed, was on motion, taken up.

Brother G. Davis offered a substitute for the first article of said report; and Dr. Samuel K. Jennings offered a substitute for the whole report; Brother A. McCain also offered an outline of a plan: all of which were read and laid on the table.

Brother J. R. Williams submitted a series of Articles of Association, and offered the following: Moved, that the house now resolve itself into a committee of the whole, for the purpose of preparing a system of government for the Methodist Reformers in these United States, who may be disposed to embrace its provisions, by associating under its articles. Carried.

On the evening of the same day, after the committee of the whole rose, brother Victor offered the following resolution: *Resolved*, That the several papers, together with the printed report of the committee on organization, be referred to a select committee, with directions to collate the same, and report thereon as soon as practicable. Carried. The Convention then appointed a committee of five; brothers Horne, McCain, Jennings, Davis and Williams.

*Thursday, Nov. 20th.*

Brother Horne, chairman of the committee to whom was referred the several papers, and the report on organization, presented their report which was read.

Brother Moore moved, that the report be read, section by section, and acted on. Carried: and on motion, *Resolved*, That this Convention unite in prayer to God; whereupon the President called on brother Comann to pray, and the Convention solemnly united in addressing the Throne of Grace.

The report was then taken up, and the *first* article adopted.

The *second* article being read and amended, was adopted.

The *third* being read, was adopted.

The *fourth* article was read and discussed; and several amendments having been offered by brothers Hall, Davis, Horne, Lipscomb and Victor, the article was adopted as amended.

The *fifth* article was read, amended and adopted.

The *sixth* article was read, amended and adopted.

The *seventh* article was read and adopted.

The *eighth* article was read, amended and adopted.

The *ninth* article was read and adopted.

The *tenth* article was read and adopted.

The *eleventh* article was read and adopted.

The *twelfth* article was read and adopted.

The *thirteenth* article was read, amended by striking out, and adopted.

The *fourteenth* article was read and adopted.

Brother S. Whitaker offered a resolution, which was carried, and adopted as the *fifteenth* article.

The *sixteenth* article was read and adopted.

Friday, Nov. 21st.

Dr. S. K. Jennings offered a resolution which was adopted as the *seventeenth* article.

The *first* resolution appended to the articles, was read, amended and adopted.

The *second* resolution was read and adopted.

The following preamble to the Articles, was offered by Dr. Jennings, and after several amendments, was, with the Articles of Association, unanimously adopted.

PREAMBLE.

“WHEREAS, the friends of a fair and equal representation in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when they have insisted on the necessity of a modification in the polity of the Church, which should recognize the fundamental principle, the only safeguard to the liberties of the people, and when they have submitted respectful petitions and memorials to the General Conference, praying for the admission of the principle, have been met in a manner which has encouraged and prepared the friends of absolute power, to request and urge them to withdraw from the fellowship of the Church, and to threaten them with excommunication if they should refuse to comply:—And *whereas*, many of our highly esteemed and useful members in the Church, by an unjustifiable violence, have been excluded from the fellowship of their brethren, and have been thereby compelled for the time being, to form themselves into religious fraternities, for the purposes of christian fellowship.

And *whereas*, all the Methodists of the United States, and perhaps of the world, have been united together in their visible fellowship, under the general rules of Mr. Wesley, which express the only condition and legitimate test of membership;—And *whereas*, in violation of good faith and brotherly love, by an exercise of power, not authorized by the Word of God, other tests have been set up for the support of that violence, by which many valuable brethren have been unlawfully excluded as aforesaid:—And *whereas*, these measures have been so conducted, that we are justified in believing it to have been the intention of the General Conference and the anti-reformers under their influence, to punish all the avowed friends of representation, and intimidate any who may feel inclined to favour that principle:—And *whereas*, the late decisions of the Baltimore and the Ohio



Annual Conferences, as also the ultimate proceedings and report of the General Conference, in relation to this subject, have placed every friend of representation in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in such a situation that their opponents have it completely in their power to compel them to renounce their principles, or be excluded from the fellowship of their brethren: And *whereas*, the ministers favourable to the principles of representation, in sundry places, are no longer admitted to ordination, or to occupy the pulpits in the Methodist Episcopal Church, to the great greivance of many:—And *whereas*, the opposers of representation appear to shew no concern for the spiritual welfare of those whom they have excluded as aforesaid, or of those who on account of such exclusions, have considered themselves called on to withdraw out of the reach of their violent measures, but hold them up to public view as evil minded persons, and prophesy evil things concerning them, notwithstanding the fact, that those who have had the best means of knowing the injured brethren, have unabated confidence in their moral and religious integrity, and in common with all the admirers of steady adherence to principle, do actually applaud their firmness, in holding fast the principle of representation, although by so doing they have been subjected to such heavy pains and penalties;—And *whereas*, the report of the General Conference, above referred to, not only has sanctioned their unjust proceedings, but in effect asserted a divine right to continue to legislate and administer the government of the Church in this oppressive manner;—Therefore, we, the delegates of the friends of a REPRESENTATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT in the Methodist Episcopal Church, elected and appointed by them to meet in convention in the city of Baltimore, in November, 1828, with a due regard to the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty as recognized by the constitution of the United States, and the several states of the Union, in common with other Protestant Churches, do, in behalf of ourselves, our constituents and our posterity, in the fear of God, solemnly PROTEST against the right of the General Conference to assume such power, or to institute or to sustain any such violent proceedings, to which it necessarily leads: and we do hereby acknowledge and sustain the right of those brethren, who have been excluded, and of those who have on their account withdrawn as aforesaid, to unite and form themselves into communities; and we do this the more willingly, because in so doing, they will now of necessity meet the demand which has been so often made by their opponents, to exhibit a plan explanatory of the changes which they desire, and what they intended to avoid 'till driven to it

by necessity, to demonstrate by its practical operations the expedience of a *representative* Methodist Church Government; and do therefore adopt the following Articles of Association for the government of such Societies as shall agree thereto, under the appellation of ASSOCIATED METHODIST CHURCHES."

#### ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

*To be observed until the next Convention.*

*Article I.* The articles of religion, general rules, means of grace, moral discipline, rites and ceremonies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are hereby declared to be the rules of faith and practice for those societies which may unite in this Association; and the mode of administering the same is hereby adopted, except when contravened by some other article.

*Art. II.* Each society, or Church, shall have the sole power to admit serious persons into full membership, and to regulate its own temporal concerns, in accordance with these articles. The stewards to be elected by the male members, over the age of twenty-one years, and the leaders by the respective classes.

*Art. III.* The right of property is declared to be vested in the respective societies, or Churches, who shall elect trustees for the purpose of holding the same for their benefit.

*Art. IV.* The trial of members shall be conducted according to the 7th section, 2d chapter of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Provided, however, that nothing therein contained shall be so construed as to deprive an accused member of the right to challenge; and provided further, that the accused shall have a right to appeal from the decision of the committee, to the next Quarterly Conference; and no member of that conference who shall have set on any case as a committee man, shall be permitted to vote on the appeal.

*Art. V.* There shall be a Quarterly Conference in each station and circuit, composed of all the ordained and licensed preachers and exhorters, belonging thereto, and of all the stewards and leaders. The preacher in charge shall be the president of the conference. The conference shall elect its own secretary. The business of the Quarterly Conference shall be, first, to inquire into the official and religious character of all its members: *Secondly*, to license exhorters and suitable persons to preach the Gospel, and to recommend to the Annual Conference, preachers for ordination, or to travel. They shall also hear and decide upon appeals from committees.

*Art. VI.* There shall be in each State, as soon as may be, one, or not exceeding two, Annual Conferences, to be composed of all the

ordained ministers, and an equal number of lay delegates; but until such time, conferences may be formed when it shall be most convenient. The lay delegates to the Annual Conferences shall be chosen by the licensed preachers, and lay male members over the age of twenty-one years, at the quarterly meetings next preceding the sitting of the Annual Conferences.

*Art. VII.* Each Annual Conference shall elect a president and secretary.

*Art. VIII.* Each Annual Conference shall provide the mode of stationing its own preachers.

*Art. IX.* It shall be the duty of the presidents of the Annual Conferences, to travel through their respective bounds, to fill vacancies, and to make such changes in the circuits, or stations, as may be deemed absolutely necessary. The president shall have the right of the pulpit in whatever place he may be, but shall not supercede the prerogatives of the minister in charge.

*Art. X.* Each Annual Conference shall have power to make such rules and regulations for its own government, and the government of the stations and circuits within its bounds, as may be necessary for the promotion of the spiritual interests of the community; Provided, nevertheless, that no rule shall be binding on the preachers or people, which shall contravene the provisions of these articles.

*Art. XI.* Each Annual Conference shall have power to receive into the itinerancy, and to ordain, such preachers as may be recommended to that body by the Quarterly Conference. The president, assisted by two or more elders, shall perform the ordination.

*Art. XII.* The Annual Conferences shall fix the times and places of their sittings.

*Art. XIII.* Every person whose name is entered on the list of travelling preachers, shall be subject to the appointment of the conference, and receive the same allowance as is provided in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

*Art. XIV.* It shall be the duty of the preacher in charge of any station or circuit, as soon as practicable after his arrival in his circuit or station, to assemble the Quarterly Meeting Conference, that he may obtain the necessary information for the proper understanding of the condition of the circuit or station, and for enlisting all the helps within its limits, for carrying on the great work of the Lord.

*Art. XV.* Nothing contained in these articles is to be so construed as to interfere with the right of property belonging to any member of this association, as recognized by the laws of the State, within the limits of which the member may reside.

by necessity, to demonstrate by its practical operations the expedience of a *representative* Methodist Church Government; and do therefore adopt the following Articles of Association for the government of such Societies as shall agree thereto, under the appellation of ASSOCIATED METHODIST CHURCHES."

#### ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

##### *To be observed until the next Convention.*

*Article I.* The articles of religion, general rules, means of grace, moral discipline, rites and ceremonies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are hereby declared to be the rules of faith and practice for those societies which may unite in this Association; and the mode of administering the same is hereby adopted, except when contravened by some other article.

*Art. II.* Each society, or Church, shall have the sole power to admit serious persons into full membership, and to regulate its own temporal concerns, in accordance with these articles. The stewards to be elected by the male members, over the age of twenty-one years, and the leaders by the respective classes.

*Art. III.* The right of property is declared to be vested in the respective societies, or Churches, who shall elect trustees for the purpose of holding the same for their benefit.

*Art. IV.* The trial of members shall be conducted according to the 7th section, 2d chapter of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Provided, however, that nothing therein contained shall be so construed as to deprive an accused member of the right to challenge; and provided further, that the accused shall have a right to appeal from the decision of the committee, to the next Quarterly Conference; and no member of that conference who shall have set on any case as a committee man, shall be permitted to vote on the appeal.

*Art. V.* There shall be a Quarterly Conference in each station and circuit, composed of all the ordained and licensed preachers and exhorters, belonging thereto, and of all the stewards and leaders. The preacher in charge shall be the president of the conference. The conference shall elect its own secretary. The business of the Quarterly Conference shall be, first, to inquire into the official and religious character of all its members: *Secondly*, to license exhorters and suitable persons to preach the Gospel, and to recommend to the Annual Conference, preachers for ordination, or to travel. They shall also hear and decide upon appeals from committees.

*Art. VI.* There shall be in each State, as soon as may be, one, or not exceeding two, Annual Conferences, to be composed of all the

ordained ministers, and an equal number of lay delegates; but until such time, conferences may be formed when it shall be most convenient. The lay delegates to the Annual Conferences shall be chosen by the licensed preachers, and lay male members over the age of twenty-one years, at the quarterly meetings next preceding the sitting of the Annual Conferences.

*Art. VII.* Each Annual Conference shall elect a president and secretary.

*Art. VIII.* Each Annual Conference shall provide the mode of stationing its own preachers.

*Art. IX.* It shall be the duty of the presidents of the Annual Conferences, to travel through their respective bounds, to fill vacancies, and to make such changes in the circuits, or stations, as may be deemed absolutely necessary. The president shall have the right of the pulpit in whatever place he may be, but shall not supercede the prerogatives of the minister in charge.

*Art. X.* Each Annual Conference shall have power to make such rules and regulations for its own government, and the government of the stations and circuits within its bounds, as may be necessary for the promotion of the spiritual interests of the community; Provided, nevertheless, that no rule shall be binding on the preachers or people, which shall contravene the provisions of these articles.

*Art. XI.* Each Annual Conference shall have power to receive into the itinerancy, and to ordain, such preachers as may be recommended to that body by the Quarterly Conference. The president, assisted by two or more elders, shall perform the ordination.

*Art. XII.* The Annual Conferences shall fix the times and places of their sittings.

*Art. XIII.* Every person whose name is entered on the list of travelling preachers, shall be subject to the appointment of the conference, and receive the same allowance as is provided in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

*Art. XIV.* It shall be the duty of the preacher in charge of any station or circuit, as soon as practicable after his arrival in his circuit or station, to assemble the Quarterly Meeting Conference, that he may obtain the necessary information for the proper understanding of the condition of the circuit or station, and for enlisting all the helps within its limits, for carrying on the great work of the Lord.

*Art. XV.* Nothing contained in these articles is to be so construed as to interfere with the right of property belonging to any member of this association, as recognized by the laws of the State, within the limits of which the member may reside.

*Art. XVI.* There shall be a General Convention, to be held in the city of Baltimore, on the first Tuesday in November, 1830, to be composed of an equal number of ministers and lay representatives, chosen by the Annual Conferences respectively.

*Art. XVII.* Supernumerary and superannuated ministers, shall be entitled to the same amount of support, which is allowed to those more effective. And if any circuit or station should be willing to support any one or more of such supernumerary or superannuated ministers, for any indefinite number of years, the privilege shall be granted them.

*Resolved* 1st. That agents be appointed, with full powers to travel through the different states, and assist in carrying into effect the articles adopted by this convention, and employ such other persons to aid them as they may deem proper.

*Resolved* 2d. That a committee of five be appointed to prepare a Constitution, a Book of Discipline, and a Hymn Book, to be submitted to the convention to be held on the first Tuesday in November, 1830, in the city of Baltimore.

On motion it was *Resolved*, That it is the opinion of the convention, that Elders and Deacons who have been, or may be deprived of their offices in the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of reform, sustain the same characters and offices, in the Associated Methodist Churches, as they did in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Brother Henkle offered the following motion ;—*Resolved*, That the convention appoint a committee of three, to draw up the form of a deed, which shall give uniformity of tenure of property intended for the use of the Associated Methodist Churches, adopted ; and brothers Henkle, Brown and Whitaker were appointed a committee, who reported a form in these words :

“This indenture, made and executed on the ——— day of ——— 18—, between A. B. of the county, parish, town or city, (as the case may be) and state of ——— or district or territory, (as the case may be) of the one part, and C. D. E. F. G. H., &c., of the county, &c., and the state, &c., (as the case may be) of the other part,—witnesseth, that whereas the said C. D. E. F. G. H., &c., have been appointed Trustees by ——— Society, one of the Societies of the Associated Methodist Churches, and the said C. D. E. F. G. H., &c., have paid unto the said A. B. as aforesaid, the sum of ——— dollars, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and all claim thereto forever released the said A. B. doth hereby bargain, grant, sell and convey, and by these presents the said A. B. doth hereby grant, sell, bargain and convey unto the said C. D. E. F. G. H., &c., and their

successors in office, appointed by the said —— Society, according to the usages of the said Society, one of the Societies of the Associated Methodist Churches, and in default of any appointment as aforesaid to the heirs of the survivor, in trust for the benefit of the said Society, one of the Associated Methodist Societies as aforesaid according to the usages and regulations of said Societies.

In witness whereof the said A. B. hath hereby subscribed his name and affixed his seal the day and date aforesaid.

TEST, M. N.

R. L. (*Seal.*)

On motion the blank in the first resolution appended to the articles, was filled up; and agents were appointed in the different States.

Brother Williams moved, that so soon as an Annual Conference shall have been formed in any state, the powers conferred on the agents for said state, by this convention, shall cease,—adopted.

On motion *Resolved*, That the convention now proceed to appoint the committee to prepare a constitution and Book of Discipline, &c., under the second resolution attached to the Articles of Association. Whereupon, brothers James R. Williams, Gideon Davis, Samuel K. Jennings, John J. Harrod and Alexander McCain, were appointed.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## PERSECUTIONS AT GEORGETOWN, D. C.—AND IN NORTH-UMBERLAND COUNTY, VA.—SUCCESS OF THE ASSOCIATED CHURCHES.

IMMEDIATELY after the rise of the Convention, the Articles of Association were published, the appointed agents entered upon their duties, and prosecuted their mission with signal success. Their operations were greatly accelerated by the reckless persecution of reformers, on the part of the authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As the expelled brethren in Baltimore and other places, had rejected the terms of the General Conference, the old side preachers felt themselves at full liberty to carry on their oppressive measures against the advocates of representation, especially against those of them who had attended the convention as delegates.

About a week after the rise of the convention, William C. Lipscomb, William King and Gideon Davis, leaders in the Georgetown station of the Methodist E. Church, were arraigned before their Quarterly Conferences, censured and removed from office for the crime of attending as delegates at the convention. The resolutions were as follows:

*Resolved 1.* That this conference do hold the acts of the said William King, Gideon Davis and William C. Lipscomb, as done in the convention, to be incompatible with the duties which the Methodist Episcopal Church requires and expects of them, as leaders and stewards in said Church.

*Resolved 2.* That the preacher in charge be, and he is hereby requested to remove the said William King, Gideon Davis and William C. Lipscomb as leaders from their official stations.

*Resolved 3.* That the appointment of William C. Lipscomb to the office of steward in this station, be, and the same is hereby revoked.

These proceedings took place on the 28th November, 1828. The persons who deputed the brethren thus ejected from their official stations, deeming themselves injured by these proceedings against their delegates, determined to hold a meeting, to consult upon measures necessary and proper to be taken, as to their future protection against proceedings so arbitrary and unjust. The meeting was held in the Presbyterian Church, by consent of the pastor, Rev. Stephen B. Balch, on Tuesday evening, 2d December, 1828.

The meeting resulted in a determination to secede from the Methodist E. Church, and to organize under the conventional articles. A paper, being a formal withdrawal from the Methodist Episcopal Church and assigning the reasons therefor, was prepared, and an invitation given to those who were favourable to the contemplated measure, to come forward and sign it. Twenty-two males signed it at once, and seventeen females gave in their names for the same purpose. We insert the paper and names, for the honour of those early martyrs to the cause of Christian liberty.

We the subscribers, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgetown, feel deeply impressed with the importance of spiritual union, and communion in our devotions.

## CHAPTER XVI.

PERSECUTIONS AT GEORGETOWN, D. C.—AND IN NORTH-  
UMBERLAND COUNTY, VA.—SUCCESS OF THE ASSOCI-  
ATED CHURCHES.

IMMEDIATELY after the rise of the Convention, the Articles of Association were published, the appointed agents entered upon their duties, and prosecuted their mission with signal success. Their operations were greatly accelerated by the reckless persecution of reformers, on the part of the authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As the expelled brethren in Baltimore and other places, had rejected the terms of the General Conference, the old side preachers felt themselves at full liberty to carry on their oppressive measures against the advocates of representation, especially against those of them who had attended the convention as delegates.

About a week after the rise of the convention, William C. Lipscomb, William King and Gideon Davis, leaders in the Georgetown station of the Methodist E. Church, were arraigned before their Quarterly Conferences, censured and removed from office for the crime of attending as delegates at the convention. The resolutions were as follows:

*Resolved* 1. That this conference do hold the acts of the said William King, Gideon Davis and William C. Lipscomb, as done in the convention, to be incompatible with the duties which the Methodist Episcopal Church requires and expects of them, as leaders and stewards in said Church.

*Resolved 2.* That the preacher in charge be, and he is hereby requested to remove the said William King, Gideon Davis and William C. Lipscomb as leaders from their official stations.

*Resolved 3.* That the appointment of William C. Lipscomb to the office of steward in this station, be, and the same is hereby revoked.

These proceedings took place on the 28th November, 1828. The persons who deputed the brethren thus ejected from their official stations, deeming themselves injured by these proceedings against their delegates, determined to hold a meeting, to consult upon measures necessary and proper to be taken, as to their future protection against proceedings so arbitrary and unjust. The meeting was held in the Presbyterian Church, by consent of the pastor, Rev. Stephen B. Balch, on Tuesday evening, 2d December, 1828.

The meeting resulted in a determination to secede from the Methodist E. Church, and to organize under the conventional articles. A paper, being a formal withdrawal from the Methodist Episcopal Church and assigning the reasons therefor, was prepared, and an invitation given to those who were favourable to the contemplated measure, to come forward and sign it. Twenty-two males signed it at once, and seventeen females gave in their names for the same purpose. We insert the paper and names, for the honour of those early martyrs to the cause of Christian liberty.

We the subscribers, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgetown, feel deeply impressed with the importance of spiritual union, and communion in our devotions.

We have been endeavouring, in our humble sphere, to serve *God*, and make our way to heaven, in the Church of our choice; but the administration of this Church, and the feelings manifested by some of its members, towards those who have been honestly seeking a modification in its government, with the sole view of promoting its interests, have been such, of late, as to have impressed our minds with the solemn truth; that in order to secure our present peace, our spiritual comforts, and our eternal welfare, it is absolutely necessary to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is a painful alternative, as it must be the severing of ties, which have been cemented by the dearest Christian relations;—but the admonitions of our consciences imperiously demand it.

The question of lay representation, it is true, is considered of great importance to the welfare of our Zion, but a refusal to grant the equitable demands of the Reformers on this point, would never have induced us to leave her communion; but when we are furnished with such strong evidences, that the mere advocating of this just and scriptural principle, is construed into an offence equal to the most flagitious immorality, and for which the highest punishment of the Church has been repeatedly inflicted; and when from personal experience some of us have felt the desolating blast of coldness, the chilling influences of neglect, and the severance of the dearest ties of Christian fellowship, as to have bowed our heads in distress, others of us have seen these things and mourned over them in silence.

Our fears have been awakened for a long time on this point, but hope buoyed us up amidst these afflictions, and we fondly indulged the idea of seeing the

day arrive, when the prejudices which had produced these unpleasant circumstances, would give way to more friendly feelings; and in the bonds of peace and concord agree to disagree on minor points, whilst all our moral powers would be unitedly exerted in pulling down the strong holds of satan. Instead of this, the hand of persecution has been exerted in the place of neglect, and we are now left without a choice; and have therefore resolved, in order to shun this coldness and neglect, and with a view to our religious consolations, to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and committing ourselves into the hands of our *God*, humbly ask his guidance and direction in this, we believe, our duty to Him, His cause, and our eternal welfare. (Signed by) William King, Leonard Mackall, sen., John Eliason, Wm. C. Lipscomb, Gideon Davis, James C. Dunn, Sampson Avard, Jeremiah Orme, Brooke Mackall, Leonard Mackall, jr., Wm. Long, John Connelly, Josh. Libby, Richard J. Bishop, Paul Stevens, Josh. Ratcliffe, Thomas B. Griffin, Frs. King, Joel Brown, Samuel Moyers, Samuel Tucker; Eliza Addison, Rosanna M. Rhodes, Ann Connelly, Mary Angel, Phoebe Lipscomb, Eliza Dunn, Eliza Avard, Mary F. Avard, Christiana King, Mary A. Stevens, Liv'a Robertson, Sarah Smith, Belinda Tucker, Eliza Jane Douglass, Cath'e Mackall, Ellinor Orme, Christiana Wagner.

After signing this paper, it being a formal withdrawal from the Methodist Episcopal Church, on motion of brother Lipscomb, it was *Resolved*, That the conventional articles, adopted at the late convention of Reformers, holden in the city of Baltimore, is hereby declared to be the ground of our union with the Associated Methodist Churches.

The meeting was closed with singing and prayer by brother Davis.

FRANCIS KING, *Secretary.*

On the following day, Dec. 3d, at a meeting convened for the purpose, the members were divided into two classes, and two class-leaders were appointed, Leonard Mackall, sen., and William King. Three stewards were also elected, John Eliason, Joel Brown, and William C. Lipscomb. These were directed to provide a house of worship, and preachers to officiate as often as practicable. Two of the brethren were appointed a committee to wait on Rev. Norval Wilson, the preacher in charge of the Georgetown station, and hand him the instrument prepared and signed by the members as their formal withdrawal from the Methodist Episcopal Church. A committee of eight members was then appointed to open a subscription, and select a site for the erection of a house for public worship. The Friday following was appointed a day of fasting and prayer, for the protection and blessing of God in behalf of this infant Church.

Thus in four days, the Quarterly Conference and the preacher in charge, removed the signers of the address from their official stations—the reformers met—withdrew—and organized a new Church, under the articles of the “Associated Methodist Churches.”

A short period after the affair at Georgetown, Rev. Benedict Burgess and several others, were publicly expelled in Northumberland County, Virginia, by Rev. Samuel Clarke, preacher in charge of Lancaster circuit, without any trial. We will present brother Burgess' own account of the expulsions and secession, in a letter to the editor of the Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer.



*Brother Dorsey*,—I am not fond of writing, but on the present occasion, it becomes my duty to give you, as far as I am able, an account of the proceedings against reformers in this county. In doing this I am determined to “extenuate nothing, nor to set down aught in malice.” If I err, it shall not be intentional; and correction of an error will be acknowledged by me with cheerfulness.

We live in Northumberland County, State of Virginia, which forms a part of what is called Lancaster circuit, in which we were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This circuit I travelled in the year 1809 and 1810. From that time I have remained here in a located relation to said Church, doing my best to promote the interests of the Redeemer’s Kingdom.

Soon after my return from the convention held in Baltimore, in November last, I received a letter from the Rev. Samuel Clark, preacher in charge of the Lancaster circuit, addressed to Benedict Burgess, Thomas Berry, John Lansdell and others, requesting information, in the following words: “Do you, or do you not, consider yourselves members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and hold yourselves amenable to its laws? or do you consider yourselves as members of another society? I wish you to give me a definite answer to these lines.” For myself I could have sent him an answer, (but not for *others*,) that I did consider myself a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The ensuing Sabbath I preached at Fairfield’s Meeting House, and informed the congregation, I thought *that* the last time I should address them as a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, concluding in my own mind that the letter was sent preparatory to a trial.

The meeting was closed with singing and prayer by brother Davis.

FRANCIS KING, *Secretary*.

On the following day, Dec. 3d, at a meeting convened for the purpose, the members were divided into two classes, and two class-leaders were appointed, Leonard Mackall, sen., and William King. Three stewards were also elected, John Eliason, Joel Brown, and William C. Lipscomb. These were directed to provide a house of worship, and preachers to officiate as often as practicable. Two of the brethren were appointed a committee to wait on Rev. Norval Wilson, the preacher in charge of the Georgetown station, and hand him the instrument prepared and signed by the members as their formal withdrawal from the Methodist Episcopal Church. A committee of eight members was then appointed to open a subscription, and select a site for the erection of a house for public worship. The Friday following was appointed a day of fasting and prayer, for the protection and blessing of God in behalf of this infant Church.

Thus in four days, the Quarterly Conference and the preacher in charge, removed the signers of the address from their official stations—the reformers met—withdrew—and organized a new Church, under the articles of the “Associated Methodist Churches.”

A short period after the affair at Georgetown, Rev. Benedict Burgess and several others, were publicly expelled in Northumberland County, Virginia, by Rev. Samuel Clarke, preacher in charge of Lancaster circuit, without any trial. We will present brother Burgess' own account of the expulsions and secession, in a letter to the editor of the Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer.

*Brother Dorsey*,—I am not fond of writing, but on the present occasion, it becomes my duty to give you, as far as I am able, an account of the proceedings against reformers in this county. In doing this I am determined to “extenuate nothing, nor to set down aught in malice.” If I err, it shall not be intentional; and correction of an error will be acknowledged by me with cheerfulness.

We live in Northumberland County, State of Virginia, which forms a part of what is called Lancaster circuit, in which we were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This circuit I travelled in the year 1809 and 1810. From that time I have remained here in a located relation to said Church, doing my best to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

Soon after my return from the convention held in Baltimore, in November last, I received a letter from the Rev. Samuel Clark, preacher in charge of the Lancaster circuit, addressed to Benedict Burgess, Thomas Berry, John Lansdell and others, requesting information, in the following words: “Do you, or do you not, consider yourselves members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and hold yourselves amenable to its laws? or do you consider yourselves as members of another society? I wish you to give me a definite answer to these lines.” For myself I could have sent him an answer, (but not for *others*,) that I did consider myself a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The ensuing Sabbath I preached at Fairfield's Meeting House, and informed the congregation, I thought *that* the last time I should address them as a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, concluding in my own mind that the letter was sent preparatory to a trial.

After the congregation was dismissed, and the society detained, I rose and observed, that I had received the above letter, and not knowing the minds of all to whom it was addressed, I thought it my duty to read it to them. After reading the letter, I told them the course I meant to pursue, and asked their concurrence; to which all appeared to agree. The press of business prevented me from accomplishing my purpose of seeing brother Clarke the next week; and on the Sunday following, which was the 21st December last, I went to meeting and found him in the pulpit. He preached from Genesis xiii. 8, 9, "And Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." I thought I saw a great discrepancy between the spirit of Abraham and that of our preacher. This might have been owing to the excitement under which he laboured. The fatal consequences of Lot's choice, were largely descanted on. After sermon, the Rev. T. C. Thornton detained the people by a short exhortation; while (as I supposed) preparations were making. After he sat down, brother Clark again resumed the stand, and as nearly as I now can recollect, addressed the congregation in the following words: "I am for peace, I serve the God of peace. It is well known that there is and has been strife in the Methodist E. Church, not on doctrines, but on Church government. There has lately been a convention in Baltimore, and those who went and those who sent delegates to that convention, have joined another

Church by that act. Therefore, the following names are to be considered as having withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church." Eight or ten names were then read out. I rose to address the congregation from the altar, when the people were dismissed and requested to withdraw, in order to hold a class meeting. After the doors were closed, I requested of brother Clark liberty to speak, and had it granted, if I would not be long. I told the society, I protested against the course that had been pursued; that my going to the convention was for the sake of consolidating those brethren who had been expelled for maintaining the principle of righteousness in representation: that I rejoiced in having had the privilege of attending the convention, and thought it one of the best acts of my life. After considerable altercation, I told brother Clark that it was probable he had not read out all, and he had better ask if there were any more. He did so, and a number more rose and observed they were equally guilty, (if there was any guilt in the act,) with myself and those other brethren who had been read out.

In the confusion that ensued, there was no appointment made for Christmas day, and of course there could have been no general notice given. As far as it could be done, there was notice, that on that day I would preach, and proceed to form an Associated Methodist Church, in Fairfield. Although the eight or ten names which were read out, were in various parts of the circuit, and the Rev. T. C. Thornton attended our meeting on Christmas, and used his best efforts to prevent, as I thought, our organization, (this he denied as being his object,) there were enough united themselves under the conventional articles, to prove that all were not

read out, who believed the government of Episcopal Methodism and despotism to be the same thing. We put down twenty-one names; elected brother Thomas Berry our class-leader, and John Lansdell our steward; appointed two prayer meetings in the week, and a day of fasting and prayer. Since then we have been on the increase, and the blessing of God appears to attend our efforts to promote the Redeemer's Kingdom. Last Saturday was quarterly meeting day for the circuit, and the Quarterly Conference, purged and purified as it was, sanctioned all that had been done, and directed their proceedings to be published.

I am now acting under the conventional articles, and shall do my best as soon as I can, to enlarge the work and spread the principles. We are in want of a man of experience and heart-felt religion, to take charge of the executive department in the Churches that are springing up in this section.

Yours in the bonds of mutual rights,

B. BURGESS.

---

Many additional accounts of expulsions and highly interesting secessions might here be given, but this would swell our work to an inconvenient size.

During the year 1829, societies and Annual Conferences were formed in several states of the Union; the Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer for that year, abounds in the most cheering information from the several travelling agents and others in relation to the rapid progress of reform and the grace of God among the people. In an editorial for October of that year the editor says:—It affords us no small gratification and comfort to receive such assurances of the Divine favour

and blessings, as our infant Zion is realizing in different parts of the country. After a long and fiery trial, hundreds who have endured with patience and stood firm to their purpose, are beginning to see the fruit of their labour. Surely if heaven's smiles are to be received as evidence that a people are right, this people must be right. Would the Lord own and bless the labours of "apostates" in this gracious manner. The work is spreading in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and several other states; and the Lord is adding to the Associated Churches, daily such as gives evidence that they have passed from death unto life, and some who promise great usefulness to the Church.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

### GENERAL CONVENTION OF 1830.—FORMATION OF THE CONSTITUTION, AND DISCIPLINE.

DURING the latter part of 1829, and the forepart of 1830, preparations were being made for holding the convention in November, in view of preparing a Constitution and Discipline for the government of the Associated Methodist Churches, in these United States. Ministerial and lay delegates were elected by their respective Annual Conferences and furnished with certificates of their election. The committee, appointed by the convention of 1828 to prepare a Constitution and Discipline, laboured hard to frame a draft which would guarantee to the ministers and members their rights and



read out, who believed the government of Episcopal Methodism and despotism to be the same thing. We put down twenty-one names; elected brother Thomas Berry our class-leader, and John Lansdell our steward; appointed two prayer meetings in the week, and a day of fasting and prayer. Since then we have been on the increase, and the blessing of God appears to attend our efforts to promote the Redeemer's Kingdom. Last Saturday was quarterly meeting day for the circuit, and the Quarterly Conference, purged and purified as it was, sanctioned all that had been done, and directed their proceedings to be published.

I am now acting under the conventional articles, and shall do my best as soon as I can, to enlarge the work and spread the principles. We are in want of a man of experience and heart-felt religion, to take charge of the executive department in the Churches that are springing up in this section.

Yours in the bonds of mutual rights,

B. BURGESS.

---

Many additional accounts of expulsions and highly interesting secessions might here be given, but this would swell our work to an inconvenient size.

During the year 1829, societies and Annual Conferences were formed in several states of the Union; the Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer for that year, abounds in the most cheering information from the several travelling agents and others in relation to the rapid progress of reform and the grace of God among the people. In an editorial for October of that year the editor says:—It affords us no small gratification and comfort to receive such assurances of the Divine favour

and blessings, as our infant Zion is realizing in different parts of the country. After a long and fiery trial, hundreds who have endured with patience and stood firm to their purpose, are beginning to see the fruit of their labour. Surely if heaven's smiles are to be received as evidence that a people are right, this people must be right. Would the Lord own and bless the labours of "apostates" in this gracious manner. The work is spreading in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and several other states; and the Lord is adding to the Associated Churches, daily such as gives evidence that they have passed from death unto life, and some who promise great usefulness to the Church.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

### GENERAL CONVENTION OF 1830.—FORMATION OF THE CONSTITUTION, AND DISCIPLINE.

DURING the latter part of 1829, and the forepart of 1830, preparations were being made for holding the convention in November, in view of preparing a Constitution and Discipline for the government of the Associated Methodist Churches, in these United States. Ministerial and lay delegates were elected by their respective Annual Conferences and furnished with certificates of their election. The committee, appointed by the convention of 1828 to prepare a Constitution and Discipline, laboured hard to frame a draft which would guarantee to the ministers and members their rights and

privileges as Christ's free men—establish an efficient and well balanced itinerancy—secure to the people, through their representatives in the respective Annual Conferences, the choice of their ministers—and thus, forever put to silence the assertion that itinerancy, representation, and the choice of ministers by the people are incompatible.

Much anxiety was felt on all hands. The Episcopal Methodists feared a development of principles and rules of government which would cast their system more deeply into the shade; but hoped we should fall out by the way—some of them predicted this with great assurance, and fixed our final dissolution at a period not exceeding three years. The reformers on the other hand, while they felt great solicitude that the convention might prepare a system worthy of admiration, did not appear to dread any fatal diversity of opinion and sentiment which might militate seriously against the general interests of the Churches. They calmly reposed confidence in the Father of all their mercies, and fervently implored his guidance and protection.

About this time attempts were made by certain ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to cast reproach on our ministers, and to bring their official acts into disrepute. This conduct, to say the least of it, was uncharitable and unwise in those whose own ordination is so frequently called in question, and who find it so difficult to sustain their pretensions before the christian community. In a periodical of the time, it was gravely stated "If a minister expatriate, he thereby dissolves the compact in virtue of which he received and holds his official functions; and, of course, those functions cease." Again "those official powers are the property

of the Church for whose use they are conferred, and were lent on certain stipulated terms, which terms, can only be performed *within* the Church to which the property belongs." These most absurd sentiments were boldly advanced to induce the belief, that those ministers who had withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and had joined any of the Associated Methodist Churches, were no longer in possession of ministerial authority, having lost their official powers by withdrawing from the said Church; and, consequently, their parchments, and acts of ordination, &c., in the Associated Churches were invalid. How far these views obtained credence we know not, but this we know, the writers and their friends plumed themselves greatly on their sagacity, and prospect of success. But alas! for them, nothing more was necessary for a complete refutation of those untenable assertions, than to point out some of the serious consequences which flow from their doctrine. If the doctrine be true, that a minister can only perform his official functions in the Church where he received them; and, that when he expatriates he loses his official functions, then it follows as a necessary consequence, that all the Protestant ordinations in *Europe* are spurious and invalid. Luther, Zuingle, Melancthon, Calvin, and all the worthies of the reformation had received their ordination in the Roman Catholic Church, or from men who had been expelled from that communion or had expatriated that Church—and, of course, according to the above doctrine, their official functions ceased—their ordinations were no longer valid—they could not exercise their functions any longer than they remained within the pale of the Catholic Church. The ordinations being invalid

in the commencement, they must remain equally so to this day.

The doctrine not only destroys the validity of all the Protestant ordinations on the continent of Europe, but it likewise involves the *British* divines in the same dilemma. They are the regular successors of those who expatriated from the Romish communion; and, consequently, are also deprived of their official standing; but these same men, without any further authority than that which they derived from their ordinations in the Roman Catholic Church, exercised ministerial functions and performed ordinations. Their successors did the same thing, until the time of Wesley, who received his ordination as a presbyter in the Church of England, after the same manner. If theirs were invalid, his was invalid, and those also on whom he laid hands, as a presbyter in the Church of England. These are the necessary consequences of the silly doctrine advanced by our Episcopal friends. If true, it as effectually destroys the validity of their own ordination, as it was designed to destroy ours. But the doctrine is not sound, nor was it ever admitted, since the Reformation, to be any thing more than a miserable popish sophism.

---

November 2d, 1830.

The delegates elected to the General Convention assembled in the city of Baltimore, and opened the session in Saint John's Church, by supplication and prayer for the Divine benediction and guidance in the most important business committed to their hands by the numerous Associated Churches. One hundred and fourteen ministerial and lay delegates were elected, out of which number, eighty-three were in attendance, from

the following named Conferences. Vermont, Massachusetts, New York and Canada, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Ohio, and Western Virginia.

Dr. Francis Waters was elected President of the Convention; and Rev. William C. Lipscomb, Secretary. On motion of brother William S. Stockton of the Pennsylvania Conference, it was Resolved, that the committee appointed at the last convention to prepare a draft of a constitution, &c., be requested to make their report. The chairman of that committee accordingly reported, and read a draft of a constitution and discipline. The draft of the discipline was laid on the table for future action, and one hundred copies of the constitution were ordered to be printed, for the use of the members of the convention. And, on motion of brother Holcombe of the Virginia Conference, it was determined that the consideration of the constitution should be the order of the day on the morrow.

On the following day the printed constitution was again read, and several other papers were presented to the convention, as suitable systems and suggestions, for consideration. After much desultory conversation on the merits and claims of the respective papers, it was determined to appoint a committee of twelve members, taking one from each conference, to receive and take into consideration all the papers; and report any principle or provision, in view of any part of our contemplated economy, which they might find to have been overlooked, or which the papers might suggest, and report on the following day.

The following named brethren were appointed on the committee, W. W. Wallace, from the Maryland Con-

in the commencement, they must remain equally so to this day.

The doctrine not only destroys the validity of all the Protestant ordinations on the continent of Europe, but it likewise involves the *British* divines in the same dilemma. They are the regular successors of those who expatriated from the Romish communion; and, consequently, are also deprived of their official standing; but these same men, without any further authority than that which they derived from their ordinations in the Roman Catholic Church, exercised ministerial functions and performed ordinations. Their successors did the same thing, until the time of Wesley, who received his ordination as a presbyter in the Church of England, after the same manner. If theirs were invalid, his was invalid, and those also on whom he laid hands, as a presbyter in the Church of England. These are the necessary consequences of the silly doctrine advanced by our Episcopal friends. If true, it as effectually destroys the validity of their own ordination, as it was designed to destroy ours. But the doctrine is not sound, nor was it ever admitted, since the Reformation, to be any thing more than a miserable popish sophism.

---

*November 2d, 1830.*

The delegates elected to the General Convention assembled in the city of Baltimore, and opened the session in Saint John's Church, by supplication and prayer for the Divine benediction and guidance in the most important business committed to their hands by the numerous Associated Churches. One hundred and fourteen ministerial and lay delegates were elected, out of which number, eighty-three were in attendance, from



the following named Conferences. Vermont, Massachusetts, New York and Canada, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Ohio, and Western Virginia.

Dr. Francis Waters was elected President of the Convention; and Rev. William C. Lipscomb, Secretary. On motion of brother William S. Stockton of the Pennsylvania Conference, it was Resolved, that the committee appointed at the last convention to prepare a draft of a constitution, &c., be requested to make their report. The chairman of that committee accordingly reported, and read a draft of a constitution and discipline. The draft of the discipline was laid on the table for future action, and one hundred copies of the constitution were ordered to be printed, for the use of the members of the convention. And, on motion of brother Holcombe of the Virginia Conference, it was determined that the consideration of the constitution should be the order of the day on the morrow.

On the following day the printed constitution was again read, and several other papers were presented to the convention, as suitable systems and suggestions, for consideration. After much desultory conversation on the merits and claims of the respective papers, it was determined to appoint a committee of twelve members, taking one from each conference, to receive and take into consideration all the papers; and report any principle or provision, in view of any part of our contemplated economy, which they might find to have been overlooked, or which the papers might suggest, and report on the following day.

The following named brethren were appointed on the committee, W. W. Wallace, from the Maryland Con-

ference; Charles Kennon, Georgia; John French, East Virginia; Nathaniel Gage, Vermont; George Thomas, New York; Asa Shinn, Ohio; Britton Capel, Alabama; Daniel Bromley, New York and Canada; John Smith, Pennsylvania; Isaac Fister, Genessee; George A. Reed, Western Virginia; Willis Harris, North Carolina.

November 4th.

The committee on drafts, papers, &c., made the following report:

The committee to whom was referred the printed constitution and papers connected with that subject, have had the same under consideration; but as no matured plan has been presented which they can substitute in the place of the one presented by the committee appointed by the convention of 1828, they beg leave to report—That the printed constitution be acted upon.

On motion, it was Resolved, that the convention now accept the outlines of the plan of a constitution reported by the committee, and proceed to adopt, reject and modify its details, article by article.

The convention proceeded to take up the constitution, article by article, commencing with the preamble and elementary principles, and laboured with great diligence and assiduity until the 16th inst. The first article of the constitution, which was laid on the table on the 5th instant, was now taken up. Brother Shinn moved to fill up the blank with the words, *The Methodist Representative Church, comprising all the Associated Methodist Churches.*

While this motion was under discussion, Dr. Waters, the President of the Convention, called Dr. French to the chair, and expressed his views in opposition to the

word "Representative," proposed by brother Shinn, and in favour of introducing the word PROTESTANT.

Brother Avery then moved to amend the amendment by substituting the word *Protestant* for Representative. The question being put, was carried unanimously.

The article was then adopted, and reads: "This Association shall be denominated, THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH, comprising the Associated Methodist Churches."

The entire constitution was now read, and adopted by a unanimous, rising vote. Here we deem it proper to insert the constitution as it passed the convention.

## CONSTITUTION

OF THE

### METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH.

WE, the Representatives of the Associated Methodist Churches, in General Convention assembled, acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as the only HEAD of the Church, and the Word of God as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, in all things pertaining to godliness; and being fully persuaded, that the representative form of Church government is the most Scriptural, best suited to our condition, and most congenial with our views and feelings as fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: AND, Whereas, a written Constitution, establishing the form of government, and securing to the Ministers and Members of the Church their rights and privileges, is the best safeguard of Christian liberty: We, therefore, trusting in the protection of Almighty God, and acting in the name and by the authority of our constituents, do ordain and establish, and agree to be governed by the following elementary principles and Constitution:

1. A Christian Church is a society of believers in Jesus Christ, and is of divine institution.

2. Christ is the only Head of the Church; and the Word of God the only rule of faith and conduct.

3. No person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and obeys the Gospel of God our Saviour, ought to be deprived of Church membership.

4. Every man has an inalienable right to private judgment, in matters of religion; and an equal right to express his opinion, in any way which will not violate the laws of God, or the rights of his fellow men.

5. Church trials should be conducted on Gospel principles only; and no minister or member should be excommunicated except for immorality; the propagation of unchristian doctrines: or for the neglect of duties enjoined by the Word of God.

6. The pastoral or ministerial office and duties are of divine appointment; and all elders in the Church of God are equal; but ministers are forbidden to be lords over God's heritage, or to have dominion over the faith of the saints.

7. The Church has a right to form and enforce such rules and regulations only, as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and may be necessary or have a tendency to carry into effect the great system of practical christianity.

8. Whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations, is inherent in the ministers and members of the Church: but so much of that power may be delegated, from time to time, upon a plan of representation, as they may judge necessary and proper.

9. It is the duty of all ministers and members of the Church to maintain godliness, and to oppose all moral evil.

10. It is obligatory on ministers of the Gospel to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties; and it is also obligatory on the members to esteem

ministers highly for their works' sake, and to render them a righteous compensation for their labours.

11. The Church ought to secure to all her official bodies the necessary authority for the purposes of good government; but she has no right to create any distinct or independent sovereignties.

## ARTICLE I.

### TITLE.

This Association shall be denominated, THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH, comprising the Associated Methodist Churches.

## ARTICLE II.

### TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP.

I. There is only one condition required of those who apply for membership in an Associated Methodist Church, viz: *A desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with an avowed determination to walk in all the commandments of God blameless.*

But those who may continue therein, must give evidence of their desire and determination, by conforming to such rules of moral discipline as the Word of God requires.

II. There shall be a state of probationary privileges in which persons shall be held as candidates for admission into membership in this Church, preparatory to their being received into full membership, by a compliance with the terms thereof.

III. The children of our members, and those under their guardianship, shall be recognized as enjoying probationary privileges, and held as candidates for membership; and may be put into classes, as such, with the consent of their parents or guardians.

## ARTICLE III.

## DIVISION INTO DISTRICTS, CIRCUITS AND STATIONS.

I. Those parts of the United States embraced by this Association, shall be divided into districts having respectively such boundaries as may be agreed on at this Convention, subject to those alterations which may be made or authorized from time to time, by the General Conference.

II. Each district shall be divided into circuits and stations, by its Annual Conference.

III. Every minister or preacher, removing from one district to another; and every member removing from one circuit, station, or Church to another, having a certificate of his or her good standing, shall be entitled to membership in any other district, circuit, station or Associated Methodist Church within the limits of this Association, to which he or she may apply for membership.

## ARTICLE IV.

## ON RECEIVING CHURCHES, &amp;c.

I. Any number of believers united as a religious Society or Church, embracing the principles of religious truth held by this Association, adopting this Constitution, and conforming to our book of discipline, and means of grace, shall, at their request, made to the President of an Annual Conference, or the superintendent of a circuit or station, be recognized as an Associated Methodist Church, and be entitled to all the privileges granted by this Constitution; subject, however, to the decision of the most adjacent Quarterly Conference.

II. An Associated Church or Society shall be composed of any number of members residing sufficiently near each other to assemble steadily for public worship, and to transact its temporal business. And every Church shall be

divided, when it becomes necessary, into smaller companies or classes, for the purposes of religious instruction and edification.

III. Every Church or Society shall have power, by the concurrence of a majority of two-thirds of its qualified male members, present at any meeting called for the purpose, to purchase, build, lease, sell, rent, or otherwise obtain or dispose of property, for the mutual benefit of the Church. Each Church shall also have power to admit persons into full membership; and to try, censure, or expel unworthy members, in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, and the rules of discipline.

IV. But no Church whatever shall be continued in connexion with this Association, which does not conform to this Constitution, and the regulations contained in the book of discipline; or which may hereafter reject any part or provision thereof.

## ARTICLE V.

### LEADERS' MEETING.

In every station there shall be a leaders' meeting, composed of all the class-leaders and stewards; the superintendent shall be chairman of the meeting.

## ARTICLE VI.

### QUARTERLY CONFERENCES.

I. There shall be four Quarterly Conferences in each circuit and station, in every Conference year, to be composed of all the ministers,\* preachers, exhorters, stewards and leaders, and trustees, in full membership, belonging to the circuit or station: Provided that the superintendent shall have authority to call special meetings of the Quarterly Conference at other times, when circumstances make it necessary.

\*A minister is one who is ordained; a preacher acts under a license.



II. Each Quarterly Conference shall be vested with power to examine into the official character of all its members, and to admonish or reprove as occasion may require; to grant to persons, properly qualified and recommended by the class of which the applicant is a member, license to preach and exhort, and renew their license annually; to admit ministers and preachers coming from any Associated Church; to recommend ministers and preachers to the Annual Conference to travel, and for ordination; to hear and decide on appeals; and to perform such other duties as are authorized by this Convention. Provided, nevertheless, that no person shall be licensed to preach until he shall have been first examined, and recommended by a committee of five, composed of ministers and laymen, chosen by the Quarterly Conference.

#### ARTICLE VII.

##### COMPOSITION AND POWERS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCES.

I. There shall be held annually within the limits of each district, a conference, to be denominated the Annual Conference, composed of all the ordained itinerant ministers belonging to the district; that is all ministers properly under the stationing authority of the conference; and of one delegate from each circuit and station for each of its itinerant ministers; provided, however, that every circuit and station shall have at least one delegate. Each Annual Conference shall regulate the manner of elections, in its own district; provided, however, that the election of delegates to the first Annual Conferences, under this Constitution, shall be according to such regulations as may be adopted for that purpose by the Quarterly Conferences of the respective circuits and stations.

II. The Annual Conferences respectively, shall be vested with power to elect a president annually; to examine into the official conduct of all its members; to receive by

vote, such ministers and preachers into the conference as come properly recommended, and who can be efficiently employed as itinerant preachers, or missionaries; to elect to orders those who are eligible and competent to the pastoral office; to hear and decide on appeals; to define and regulate the boundaries of circuits and stations; to station the ministers, preachers and missionaries; and to perform such other duties as are prescribed by this Convention, or may be prescribed by the General Conference.

III. To make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the itinerant ministers, preachers and their families; to raise the amount of their salaries as fixed by the Convention, and for all other purposes connected with the organization and continuance of said conferences.

IV. The Annual Conferences, respectively, shall also have authority to perform the following additional duties:—

1st. To make such special rules and regulations as the peculiarities of the district may require; provided, however, that no rule or regulation be made, inconsistent with this Constitution. And provided, furthermore, that the General Conference shall have power to annul any rule or regulation which that body may deem unconstitutional.

2d. To prescribe and regulate the mode of stationing the ministers and preachers within the district; provided, always, that they grant to each minister or preacher stationed, an appeal, during the sitting of the conference.

3d. Each Annual Conference shall have exclusive power to make its own rules and regulations for the admission and government of coloured members within its district; and to make for them such terms of suffrage as the conferences respectively may deem proper.

But neither the General Conference nor any Annual Conference, shall assume power to interfere with the con-

stitutional powers of the civil governments, or with the operations of the civil laws; yet, nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to authorize or sanction any thing inconsistent with the morality of the Holy Scriptures.

Each Annual Conference shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and send a copy to the General Conference.

## ARTICLE VIII.

### COMPOSITION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

I. There shall be a General Conference of this Association, on the first Tuesday in May, in the year of our Lord 1834, in Georgetown, District of Columbia, and on the first Tuesday in May, every seventh\* year thereafter in such place as may be determined on by the conference.

II. The General Conference shall consist of an equal number of ministers and laymen. The ratio of representation from each district shall be one minister and one layman for every thousand persons in full membership; Provided, however, that any district which may not have one thousand members shall be entitled to two representatives, one minister and one layman, until a different ratio shall be fixed by the General Conference.

III. The number of representatives to which each district may be entitled, shall be elected at the time, and place of holding the Annual Conference of the district, next preceding the sitting of the General Conference, by the joint ballot of an electoral college, composed of the itinerant ministers and delegates belonging to the Annual Conference, and of one minister, who is not under the stationing authority of the conference, provided there be such, from each circuit and station within the limits of the district. The minister thus added from each circuit and station, shall be elected at the time and place of holding the Quarterly Conference, by the ministers in his circuit

\*Subsequently altered to every fourth year.

or station, not under the stationing power of the Annual Conference. Provided, however, that the delegates from the respective circuits, and stations, be laymen; and provided, also, that it require the affirmative vote of a majority of all the lay delegates present, as well as of a majority of the votes of all the ministers present, to constitute the election of any representative to the General Conference.

IV. The General Conference shall elect by ballot, a president to preside over its deliberations; and one or more secretaries, to serve during the sitting of the conference; shall also judge of election returns, and qualifications of its own members, and form its own rules of order. A majority of all the representatives in attendance shall constitute a quorum.

V. The ministers and laymen shall deliberate in one body; but if, upon the final passage of any question, it be required by three members, the ministers and laymen shall vote separately, and the concurrence of a majority of both classes of representatives shall be necessary to constitute a vote of the conference.—A similar regulation shall be observed by the Annual Conferences.

VI. The yeas and nays shall be recorded at the call of one-fifth part of the members present.

VII. The conference shall publish such parts of the journal of its proceedings, as it may deem requisite.

VIII. All papers, books, &c., belonging to the conference, shall be preserved as that body may direct.

## ARTICLE IX.

### POWERS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

I. The General Conference shall have power to make rules and regulations for the Itinerant, Missionary, Literary, and every other department of the Church, recognized by this Constitution.

II. To fix the compensation and duties of the itinerant ministers and preachers, and the allowance for their wives, widows and children; and also the compensation and duties of the book agent, editor, &c., and to devise means for raising funds.

III. To regulate, from time to time, the number of representatives to the General Conference; provided, that the General Conference shall at no time exceed one hundred members.

IV. To define and regulate the boundaries of the respective Annual Conference districts; provided, however, that the Annual Conferences of any two or more districts, shall have power, by mutual agreement, to alter their respective adjoining boundaries, or to unite and become one district, or to set off a new district; to receive into their respective limits and jurisdiction any station or circuit, which does not belong to some other district; but every alteration made in the boundaries of the respective districts, shall be reported to the ensuing General Conference.

#### ARTICLE X.

##### RESTRICTIONS ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES.

I. No rule shall be passed which shall contravene any law of God.

II. No rule shall be passed which shall infringe the right of suffrage, eligibility to office, or the rights and privileges of our ministers, preachers and members, to an impartial trial by committee, and of an appeal, as provided by this Constitution.

III. No rule shall be passed infringing the liberty of speech, or of the press; but for every abuse of liberty, the offender shall be dealt with as in other cases of indulging in sinful words and tempers.

IV. No rule, except it be founded on the Holy Scriptures, shall be passed authorizing the expulsion of any minister, preacher or member.

V. No rule shall be passed appropriating the funds of the Church to any purpose except the support of the ministry, their wives, widows and children; the promotion of education, and missions; the diffusion of useful knowledge; the necessary expenses consequent on assembling the conferences, and the relief of the poor.

VI. No higher order of ministers shall be authorized than that of elder.

VII. No rule shall be passed to abolish an efficient itinerant ministry, or to authorize the Annual Conferences to station their ministers and preachers longer than three years, successively, in the same circuit, and two years successively in the same station.

VIII. No change shall be made in the relative proportions, or component parts of the General or Annual Conferences.

## ARTICLE XI.

### OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

#### *Presidents of the Annual Conferences.*

1. The president of each Annual Conference shall be elected annually, by the ballot of a majority of the members of the conference. He shall not be eligible more than three years successively; and shall be amenable to that body for his official conduct.

2. It shall be the duty of the president of an Annual Conference, to preside in all meetings of that body; to travel through the district, and visit all the circuits and stations, and to be present, as far as practicable, at all the quarterly meetings and camp meetings of his district; and, in the recess of conference, with the assistance of two or more elders, to ordain those persons who may be elected to orders; to employ such ministers, preachers, and missionaries, as are duly recommended; and to make such changes of preachers as may be necessary, provided

II. To fix the compensation and duties of the itinerant ministers and preachers, and the allowance for their wives, widows and children; and also the compensation and duties of the book agent, editor, &c., and to devise means for raising funds.

III. To regulate, from time to time, the number of representatives to the General Conference; provided, that the General Conference shall at no time exceed one hundred members.

IV. To define and regulate the boundaries of the respective Annual Conference districts; provided, however, that the Annual Conferences of any two or more districts, shall have power, by mutual agreement, to alter their respective adjoining boundaries, or to unite and become one district, or to set off a new district; to receive into their respective limits and jurisdiction any station or circuit, which does not belong to some other district; but every alteration made in the boundaries of the respective districts, shall be reported to the ensuing General Conference.

### ARTICLE X.

#### RESTRICTIONS ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES.

I. No rule shall be passed which shall contravene any law of God.

II. No rule shall be passed which shall infringe the right of suffrage, eligibility to office, or the rights and privileges of our ministers, preachers and members, to an impartial trial by committee, and of an appeal, as provided by this Constitution.

III. No rule shall be passed infringing the liberty of speech, or of the press; but for every abuse of liberty, the offender shall be dealt with as in other cases of indulging in sinful words and tempers.

IV. No rule, except it be founded on the Holy Scriptures, shall be passed authorizing the expulsion of any minister, preacher or member.



V. No rule shall be passed appropriating the funds of the Church to any purpose except the support of the ministry, their wives, widows and children; the promotion of education, and missions; the diffusion of useful knowledge; the necessary expenses consequent on assembling the conferences, and the relief of the poor.

VI. No higher order of ministers shall be authorized than that of elder.

VII. No rule shall be passed to abolish an efficient itinerant ministry, or to authorize the Annual Conferences to station their ministers and preachers longer than three years, successively, in the same circuit, and two years successively in the same station.

VIII. No change shall be made in the relative proportions, or component parts of the General or Annual Conferences.

## ARTICLE XI.

### OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

#### *Presidents of the Annual Conferences.*

1. The president of each Annual Conference shall be elected annually, by the ballot of a majority of the members of the conference. He shall not be eligible more than three years successively; and shall be amenable to that body for his official conduct.

2. It shall be the duty of the president of an Annual Conference, to preside in all meetings of that body; to travel through the district, and visit all the circuits and stations, and to be present, as far as practicable, at all the quarterly meetings and camp meetings of his district; and, in the recess of conference, with the assistance of two or more elders, to ordain those persons who may be elected to orders; to employ such ministers, preachers, and missionaries, as are duly recommended; and to make such changes of preachers as may be necessary, provided

the consent of the preachers to be changed, be first obtained; and to perform such other duties as may be required by his Annual Conference.

*Ministers.*

1. The minister, who shall be appointed by the Annual Conference, to the charge of a station or circuit, shall be styled, the superintendent; and shall be amenable to the Annual Conference for his official conduct.

2. The minister or preacher appointed by the Annual Conference to assist the superintendent in the discharge of his pastoral duties, shall be styled the assistant; and shall be amenable to the Annual Conference for the faithful discharge of duty.

3. It shall be the duty of every minister and preacher belonging to a circuit or station, to render all the pastoral assistance he can, consistently with his other engagements; but no minister or preacher shall be accountable to the Annual Conference for the discharge of ministerial duty, except he be an itinerant minister or preacher; all others shall be accountable to the Quarterly Conference of their circuit or station.

4. No person shall be recognized as an itinerant minister, preacher or missionary, whose name is not enrolled on the Annual Conference list, or who will not be subject to the order of the conference.

*Class Leaders.*

The class leaders may be elected annually by the members of their respective classes; but if, in any instance, a class shall neglect or refuse to elect a leader, when one is wanted, it shall then be the duty of the superintendent to nominate a class leader for said class, and from the nomination or nominations made by the superintendent, the class shall make an election.

*Conference Stewards.*

The conference steward shall be elected annually by the Annual Conference, and discharge those duties assigned to him by the discipline, and be amenable to the Annual Conference for his official conduct.

*Station and Circuit Stewards.*

The station and circuit stewards shall be elected annually; in the stations, by the male members, including ministers and preachers; and in the circuits, by the Quarterly Conference; but every qualified male member, if present, shall be permitted to vote in the election of circuit stewards. The number of stewards for each circuit or station to be not less than three, nor more than seven.

## ARTICLE XII.

## SUFFRAGE AND ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

I. Every minister and preacher, and every white, lay, male member, in full communion and fellowship, having attained to the age of twenty-one years, shall be entitled to vote in all cases.

II. Every minister and preacher, and every white, lay, male member, in full communion and fellowship, having attained to the age of twenty-five years, and having been in full membership two years, shall be eligible as a representative in the General Conference.

III. No person shall be eligible as a delegate to the Annual Conference, or as a steward, who has not attained to the age of twenty-one years, and who is not a regular communicant of this Church.

IV. No minister shall be eligible to the office of president of an Annual Conference, until he shall have faithfully exercised the office of elder two years.

## ARTICLE XIII.

## JUDICIARY PRINCIPLES.

I. All offences condemned by the Word of God, as being sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, shall subject ministers, preachers and members, to expulsion from the Church.

II. The neglect of duties required by the Word of God, or the indulgence in sinful words and tempers, shall subject the offender to admonition; and if persisted in, after repeated admonitions, to expulsion.

III. For preaching or disseminating unscriptural doctrines, affecting the essential interests of the christian system, ministers, preachers, and members, shall be liable to admonition; and, if incorrigible, to expulsion: Provided always, that no minister, preacher or member, shall be expelled for disseminating matters of opinion alone, except they be such as are condemned by the Word of God.

IV. All officers of the Church shall be liable to removal from office, for mal-administration.

## ARTICLE XIV.

## PRIVILEGES OF ACCUSED MINISTERS AND MEMBERS.

I. In all cases of accusation against a minister, preacher, or member, the accused shall be furnished by the proper authorities, with a copy of the charges and specifications, at least twenty days before the time appointed for the trial; unless the parties concerned prefer going into trial on shorter notice. The accused shall have the right of challenge; the privilege of examining witnesses at the time of trial; and of making his defence in person or by representative; provided such representative be a member of the Church.

II. No minister, or preacher, shall be expelled, or deprived of Church privileges, or ministerial functions, with-

out an impartial trial before a committee, of from three to five ministers or preachers, and the right of appeal; the preachers, to the ensuing Quarterly Conference; the ministers to the ensuing Annual Conference.

III. No member shall be expelled or deprived of Church privileges, without an impartial trial before a committee of three or more lay members, or before the society of which he is a member, as the accused may require, and the right of an appeal to the ensuing Quarterly Conference; but no committee man who shall have sat on the first trial, shall sit on the appeal; and all appeals shall be final.

## ARTICLE XV.

### DISCIPLINE JUDICIARY.

I. Whenever a majority of all the Annual Conferences shall officially call for a judicial decision on any rule or act of the General Conference, it shall be the duty of each and every Annual Conference to appoint, at its next session, one judicial delegate, having the same qualifications of eligibility as are required for a representative to the General Conference. The delegates thus chosen, shall assemble at the place where the General Conference held its last session, on the second Tuesday in May following their appointment.

II. A majority of the delegates shall constitute a quorum; and if two-thirds of all present judge said rule or act of the General Conference unconstitutional, they shall have power to declare the same null and void.

III. Every decision of the judiciary shall be in writing, and shall be published in the periodical belonging to this Church. After the judiciary shall have performed the duties assigned them by this Constitution, their powers shall cease; and no other judiciary shall be created until after the session of the succeeding General Conference.

## ARTICLE XVI.

## SPECIAL CALL OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

I. Two-thirds of the whole number of the Annual Conferences, shall have power to call special meetings of the General Conference.

II. When it shall have been ascertained that two-thirds of the Annual Conferences have decided in favour of such call, it shall be the duty of the presidents, or a majority of them, forthwith, to designate the time and place of holding the same, and to give due notice to all the stations and circuits.

## ARTICLE XVII.

## PROVISION FOR ALTERING THE CONSTITUTION.

I. The General Conference shall have power to amend any part of this Constitution, except the second, tenth and fourteenth articles, by making such alterations or additions, as may be recommended in writing, by two-thirds of the whole number of the Annual Conferences, next preceding the sitting of the General Conference.

II. The second, tenth and fourteenth articles of this Constitution shall be unalterable, except by a general convention, called for the special purpose, by two-thirds of the whole number of the Annual Conferences, next preceding the General Conference. Which convention, and all other conventions of this Church, shall be constituted and elected in the same manner and ratio, as prescribed for the General Conference. When a General Convention is called by the Annual Conferences, it shall supersede the assembling of the General Conference for that period; and shall have power to discharge all the duties of that body, in addition to the particular object for which the convention shall have been assembled.

After the adoption of the Constitution, the draft of the discipline was taken up, considered and acted on, rule by rule, and finally passed as amended, as it appears in the book of discipline of 1830.

The committee appointed on book agent and editor, presented a letter from brother John J. Harrod, dated Nov. 15, 1830, containing proposals for the publication of books.

*To the General Convention.*

*Dear Brethren,*—The undersigned, for the purpose of supplying the Church with books, and raising a fund from the sale thereof for the use of the Church, would respectfully tender to the convention his willingness to publish such books as may be agreed on by a book committee and himself. Which books shall be sold to preachers at wholesale prices. He further pledges himself to make a discount of ten per cent. from the wholesale prices on all the receipts paid to him by the preachers, which said ten per cent. shall be paid over annually to the committee or their agent, and shall be held as a book fund for the Church.

Very Respectfully,

Baltimore, Nov. 15, 1830.

JOHN J. HARROD.

On motion, it was Resolved, that the proposition of brother J. J. Harrod in relation to his Hymn Book, and the publication of such books as may be agreed on by the book committee and himself to be published for the Methodist Protestant Church, be accepted.

Brother E. Henkle offered the following:

*Resolved*, That the Hymn Book published by brother J. J. Harrod, be adopted by this convention, to be used in all our Churches, until the next General Conference. Adopted.



On motion of brother Holcombe, it was Resolved, that the book committee be now appointed, and that it consist of five persons. The following brethren were then duly elected, Dr. Francis Waters, James R. Williams, Dr. Samuel K. Jennings, John Chappell, sen., and John H. Kennard.

It was made the duty of the book committee to select from time to time, such books and tracts, &c., for publication as they might deem suitable, with the concurrence of the book agent. The Annual Conference of the Maryland district, to have power to fill all vacancies occurring in the board. In the interval of conference, the committee to fill its own vacancies, subject however, to the approval or rejection of the Annual Conference. To receive from the book agent the ten per centage on the wholesale prices of all books sold by him; and to invest the amount, in view of raising a fund for the establishment of a Church book concern. To appoint an editor to the "Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant," in the event of the death, removal, or resignation of the editor elect; and to take charge of all the avails of the paper, subscription list, books, manuscripts, &c., belonging to the periodical.

On motion of brother E. Henkle, the convention proceeded to ballot for an editor, whereupon William S. Stockton was duly elected.\*

On motion it was Resolved, that the periodical be called the Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant, to be issued weekly.

Here it will be proper to state, that heretofore, the periodical was owned and published under the authority

\*Brother Stockton subsequently resigned.

of the Baltimore Union Society. The following proposal on the part of the Society was made to the convention, in view of transferring the work to the convention.

At a meeting of the Union Society of Baltimore held on the 6th instant it was

*Resolved*, to transfer the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," to the General Convention of the Associated Methodist Churches, now sitting in this city, upon the following terms; to wit:

1st. That the said convention have the work published in the city of Baltimore for the benefit of the Church, aforesaid, and

2d. That the said convention discharge the debts due by said Union Society, on account of Mutual Rights published in pamphlet form.

*Resolved*, That John H. Kennard, L. J. Cox, and David Herring, be a committee to make the above transfer in behalf of this Society.

JOHN CHAPPELL, *Pres't*.

E. S. EBBS, *Sec'ry*.

*Baltimore, November 6th, 1830.*

The terms were accepted by the convention, and the following resolution passed:

*Resolved*, that the Union Society of Baltimore, be indemnified out of the avails of the Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant, for expenses incurred in the publication of the Mutual Rights, upon the delivery of the list of subscribers and the stock on hand.

The committee on boundaries of Annual Conferences made a report, which after undergoing some modifications, was adopted. See first edition of the Book of Discipline.

We record the following temperance resolutions offered by Thomas H. Stockton, and adopted by the convention, as well worthy of the mover, the convention, and of a place in this history.

Brother Thomas H. Stockton offered the following resolutions, which were read and adopted by the convention, viz:—

1. *Resolved*, That the efforts of the friends of temperance to promote entire abstinence from the use of ardent spirits, except as a medicine, meet our cordial approbation.

2. *Resolved*, That we deeply regret that any professed christians, should at this day and under the lights which providence has furnished, continue to manufacture, vend or use ardent spirits.

3. *Resolved*, That we earnestly hope that the making, vending and using of distilled liquors as an article of luxury, or diet, will be abandoned by all the friends of the Redeemer, throughout our country, and throughout the world.

On the last day of the convention the following important resolution was unanimously passed:

WHEREAS, it is declared by this convention, that whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations, is inherent in the ministers and members of the Church; and that so much of that power may be delegated from time to time, upon a plan of representation as they may judge proper—therefore,

*Resolved*, That all power not delegated to the respective official bodies of the Methodist Protestant Church by this convention, are retained to said ministers and members.

The above resolution is considered highly important, because it effectually debars all *assumptions* of authority in any of the official bodies of the Church, and restricts the General and Annual Conferences to the *literal* provisions of the constitution.

The convention having accomplished the objects of its appointment, the ministers and members commenced anew their efforts to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom under the most favourable circumstances. The official bodies of the Church, and the entire membership, united in the great work of building up their Zion, and of exemplifying the practicability of sustaining a well-balanced and efficient itinerancy in connection with an equitable representation. It will be seen by a perusal of our periodical, the "Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant," that much harmony prevailed in all our borders; that revivals were frequent, and that there was a steady increase of members in our fellowship. That paper, like its predecessors, was of immense benefit to our entire fellowship, by keeping the Churches well advised on all subjects of interest—by furnishing a medium through which the ministers and members might exchange views, and be brought to see eye to eye, on questions where a diversity of opinion prevailed—and by detailed accounts of the progress of the work of God in different parts of our extended field of operations. All which served the valuable purposes of enlightening, harmonising, and encouraging the ministers and members of our Church.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1834.—SUBSEQUENT CALL  
OF A SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE FOR 1838.—  
BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS, &C.

THE first General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church assembled in Georgetown, D. C. on the 6th of May, 1834. The following is a list of the ministerial and lay representatives elect and in attendance.

REPRESENTATIVES TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF  
MAY, 1834.

*Maryland Conference.*

## MINISTERS.

John S. Reese,  
Eli Henkle,  
William C. Lipscomb,  
James R. Williams,

## LAYMEN.

John Chappell,  
William Quinton,  
Thomas Jacobs,  
Philemon B. Hopper.

*Pennsylvania Conference.*

John Smith,

Jeremiah Stull.\*

*New York Conference.*

Thomas W. Pearson,

James Wood.

*Champlain Conference.*

No representation.

No representation.

*Vermont Conference.*

Justice Byington,\*

Solomon Mason.\*

*Massachusetts Conference.*

James D. Yates,\*

William Wyman.

*Genesee Conference.*

James Covell,\*

Sylvanus Teber.\*

*Virginia Conference.*

John French,\*

J. J. Boroughs.

*Ohio and Pittsburg Conferences.*

Asa Shinn,  
Cornelius Springer,

Thomas McKeever,  
Moses Lyon,\*

\* Those marked thus \* were not present

## MINISTERS.

Charles Avery,  
George Brown,  
John Clarke,  
J. H. Overstreet,\*  
Nicholas Snethen,  
Ashby Pool,\*  
Saul Henkle,  
James Towler,

## LAYMEN.

John W. Philips,\*  
W. Disney,\*  
Edward Newton,  
James Barnes,  
Walter Forward,\*  
Erastus Hoskins,\*  
T. P. Armstrong,\*  
Stephen Bell.

*North Carolina Conference.*

Willis Harris,

Spear Whitaker.

*Georgia Conference.*

Charles Evans,

R. A. Blount.

*Alabama Conference.*

James Meek,\*

M. Megee.\*

*Tennessee Conference.*

William B. Elgin,

James L. Armstrong.

Rev. Nicholas Snethen was elected president, and Rev. W. C. Lipscomb, secretary.

A particular examination of the discipline was had at this conference, and some very important improvements were made, which had been suggested by the practical operations of the system since the General Convention of 1830. By a reference to the printed journal, and by a comparison of the discipline of 1830 with that for 1834, the reader will obtain all the information he may wish, on the acts and doings of this conference. No attempt was made to alter the constitution. That instrument appeared to be held in high estimation by all the representatives; and the greatest solicitude was manifested to avoid the slightest infraction of its provisions.

The following resolution, however, was passed at this General Conference, explanatory of a provision of

the third section of the fourteenth article of the constitution.

*“Resolved,* That this General Conference view the clause of the constitution, contained in the third section of article fourteen, which reads, ‘in the society of which he is a member,’ as being only applicable to classes in circuits; since if applied to stations, it will necessarily preclude the possibility of doing justice to an accused member, seeing his accusers would form a constituent part of his jury, and would unavoidably deprive the accused member of an appeal.”

There were now fourteen Annual Conference districts, to wit, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Ohio, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, New York, Genesee, Champlain, Vermont, and Boston district.

Taking all the circumstances into view, the Methodist Protestant Church had prospered beyond all precedent. When she first organized under the Conventional Articles in 1828, there were, perhaps, not more than one thousand members, though the convention represented, probably, three thousand members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The convention of 1830 represented about five thousand members of the Associated Methodist Churches. Four years after that period, in 1834, there were, according to the minutes of the respective Annual Conferences, 26,587 members in the Methodist Protestant Church.

The following table is made up from the minutes. Some of these, however, only report up to 1833.

Vermont Annual Conference District,	800
Boston                   “                   “                   “	300
New York and Canada                   “	360



Genesee Annual Conference District,		1,300
New York	" "	1,600
Pennsylvania	" "	1,600
Maryland	" "	4,227
Virginia	" "	1,000
North Carolina	" "	1,500
Tennessee	" "	1,400
Georgia	" "	1,000
Alabama	" "	1,000
Ohio	" "	10,500

---

Total, 26,587

The whole number of ministers and preachers appears to have been over 500, about one third part of them were itinerant.

The then current volume of the "Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant" was continued under the direction of brother John J. Harrod, its editor and publisher, up to the first of June, 1834. At which time the book committee engaged brothers Snethen and Shinn, to edit the new periodical. And brother Harrod continued to publish and sell books to the Church, on his own responsibility, allowing ten per cent. of his profits for the privilege of selling to our entire fellowship.

In the fall of 1834, it was clearly ascertained, that, in consequence of losses sustained by brother Harrod in the publication of the four volumes of the "Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant," and the sale of books on credit, he would not be able to fulfil his engagement with the late General Conference to print and publish any considerable quantity of books; and he made known to the book committee his utter inability to proceed with the business. A plan for a book company was

then submitted for the approval and co-operation of the committee, which, it was believed by business men, would be profitable, both to the Church and to those who might embark in the enterprise.

The plan proposed a subscription of \$20,000, in shares of \$50 each, to be paid in five equal instalments, the whole amount to be expended in plates, books, &c., for the purpose of establishing a book business in the city of Baltimore. The business to be conducted by ten directors, to act as such till July, 1841, at which period, the corporation was to cease, and a distribution of assets to be made among the individuals composing the company, in proportion to the amount of stock owned by each. For the special benefit of the Methodist Protestant Church, the charter enacts; "That in consideration of the facilities furnished by the ministers and members of the Methodist P. Church for the distribution of tracts and the sale of books, and for the purpose of enabling said Church to create a book fund for literary purposes, the directors of this company shall pay to the book committee of said Church, one third part of all the profits arising out of the business, previously to their making or declaring a dividend of profits to the stockholders."—Art. 6. And furthermore, it was enacted, "That the book committee of the Methodist Protestant Church, shall have the privilege, at any time after the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and thirty-five, to purchase the entire stock in trade belonging to the company, consisting of stereotype plates, books, copy-rights, &c., the plates at a fair valuation, and the books, &c., at cost."—Art. 7. The plan appeared feasible, and one half of the capital stock was taken in this city; and a travelling agent was appointed to sell the

remainder, and solicit donations to the Church, in view of raising a fund for the establishment of a future book concern. The travelling agent, brother T. H. Stockton, and those who succeeded him, brothers Augustus Webster, and Wm. Kesley, were successful to a very considerable extent. But the company's project, after great and meritorious efforts on the part of the directors and the home agent, brother Harrod, disappointed its projectors and patrons. It made many bad debts, during the commercial difficulties of the times, and finally wound up its business with great loss.

The Church was yet without a book concern, which, at the time, was deemed by many as an essential auxiliary to her finances. The travelling agents had, however, obtained donations and subscriptions to some considerable amount, but not sufficient to justify the book committee to commence a book business.

At the completion of the first volume of the "Methodist Protestant," Mr. Snethen retired from the editorial duties, and Mr. Shinn, aided by two members of the book committee, edited the second volume. The paper, like its predecessors, came up to the end of the year in debt, and the book committee were in advance for the publication \$1,214. Not less than 550 of the subscribers had omitted to pay their subscription.

In the fall of the year 1835, brother Snethen published his work on lay representation, which consists of a collection of the numerous papers he had written on that subject. These essays were collected by their author, from our several periodicals extending from 1820 to 1829 inclusive. The avowed design of the author of this valuable collection was, 1. To preserve his numerous productions from the common fate of

occasional pieces published in periodicals. 2. To answer the purpose of historical documents, embracing his views on representation and Church government. This work should have a place in the library of every Methodist Protestant. To those of us, his fellow-labourers in the cause of representation, who have read his essays many times over, there is still found, on a re-perusal, a freshness and excellence that never fails to please and instruct.

About this time, by the minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, there appears to have been a great falling off in point of numbers in that community. In the Baltimore, South Carolina, Philadelphia, New York, Oneida, and Genesee Conferences, there was a very considerable decrease of members, while the increase in the other conferences was by no means in proportion to what it had been in former years. In our own Church, though accounts of revivals, were frequent and cheering, yet, we were evidently making slow advances. In some conferences we also fell short of the numbers returned the preceding year, and needed to attend to the exhortation given by the editor of the "Christian Advocate" to his Episcopal brethren "this calls for humility on our part—for self examination—as well as much prayer, and renewed exertions."

During the progress of the second volume of the Methodist Protestant a protracted discussion arose on the propriety and necessity of a special call of the General Conference. The convention of 1830 had fixed the period for assembling the General Conference, to every seventh year, after the first session. This period was viewed by many, as too remote; and they strenuously contended for a shorter period, and offered

a variety of considerations to induce the respective Annual Conferences to give the constitutional majority for a special call and recommendation, to shorten the period. Others opposed the call as an unnecessary agitation of our infant societies; and, argued, that a year or two before the time appointed for the regular session the necessary recommendation could be had, and the period for holding the conference restricted without any premature contest or agitation. The question, however, was finally decided by a majority of the Annual Conferences in favour of a special call for May, 1838.

Hitherto we had no Church organization in South Carolina, but in the summer of 1834, circumstances conspired to raise up in a short space of time a Methodist Protestant Church in Charleston, which became the nucleus of a South Carolina Annual Conference. The subjoined letter from brother John H. Honour, will furnish authentic information of the expulsions and withdrawals, and organizations which took place in that city.

*Copy of a letter from brother Honour of Charleston, South Carolina.*

*Dear Brethren,*—For some time past there has existed much dissatisfaction among the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city, in consequence of the arbitrary and unjustifiable conduct of the ministry. Affairs at length reached a crisis. Eight respectable men of good standing, all of whom had been class leaders—some of them for a number of years—were expelled from the Church for a difference of opinion with regard to discipline. In consequence of this high-handed proceeding, one hundred and fifty other members withdrew from the communion, and formed themselves into a separate Church.

The seceders now began to look around to see whether there did not exist a Church whose doctrines, forms, and means of grace were similar to those to which they had been so long accustomed, and for which they feel a strong partiality; and that, at the same time, was conducted on republican principles and mutual rights. They naturally turned their eyes toward the Methodist Protestant Church, and as soon as practicable obtained and examined the discipline, and much to their gratification, ascertained that it was exactly what they wanted. A general meeting of the members was called, and the constitution, rules, and discipline read; and so well suited was it considered to our wants, that it was unanimously adopted; and we are now one of the Associated Churches. A building committee has been appointed to raise funds for the purchase of a lot, and the erection of a house of worship, as speedily as possible. In the mean time our Baptist brethren have kindly granted us the use of their commodious lecture room where we have divine service regularly three times on the Sabbath, and twice in the week; we are without a minister, but are occasionally favoured with the services of clergymen of other denominations, and at other times, some of the official brethren conduct a prayer meeting or read a sermon, &c. Our congregations are large and respectable; on the Sabbath particularly our place of worship, which is not a very small one, is crowded. We have also organized a Sunday school of fifty scholars.

Perhaps there never was a better beginning for a Church in any place. Our members are active, zealous, and persevering, consisting mostly of young members; though there are among us some aged pilgrims, who, for

more than forty years, have been exemplary members of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and we have good reason to believe that many of our brethren who remained behind, are only waiting for us to be properly organized, and to have a Church of our own, and a regular minister of the gospel, when they will join with us. Indeed it is only necessary for men to get rid of their deeply rooted prejudices in favour of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when they cannot but see the great advantages of being attached to a Church where the rights of the members are respected, and they have a voice in the legislative department of the Church, and not subject to the domination of the ministry, in whose hands are lodged exclusive power, legislative, executive, and judicial.

Having abandoned all our claims upon the houses of worship of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we are obliged to begin *de novo*, although we and our fathers have contributed no little towards the establishment and support of that Church. We anticipate some difficulty in procuring funds sufficient for the supply of our wants, but intend to go perseveringly forward, trusting in the God of our salvation, and looking to our brethren elsewhere to give us what help they can.

Yours, in the bonds of Gospel liberty,

JOHN H. HONOUR.

*Charleston, S. C. August 19, 1834.*

Brother Snethen visited this Church in the spring of 1835, and after describing their new Church, which he supposed would contain about 1200 persons, remarks, in his letter; "As it regards theory, I think, our friends are pretty well settled in judgment, and no reason now appears why they may not honour the cause of represen-



tation, which, if they do, will certainly honour them. These people, it is probable, would have been scattered, had not our fellowship existed. Now, with judicious management, and the divine blessing, they may obtain a name and a praise among the Churches." Subsequent visits were made to the Charleston Church by brothers Thomas H. Stockton, Isaac Webster, and F. Stier, who all reported favourably. And brother William C. Pool was selected as their superintendent, and subsequently, Dr. Daniel Davies. Finally, this handful of reformers expanded into an Annual Conference.

In the spring of 1838, however, our infant Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was consumed during the great conflagration in that city. This was a great calamity to our brethren in that region. The house had been finished only three years, at the cost of \$12,000, and they were still indebted \$4,000. Their prospect to pay their debt, was flattering, but alas! in one single terrific night their house of worship was reduced to ashes. Those of their fellow-citizens to whom they might otherwise have looked for aid, were generally involved in the same calamity, and were, therefore, unable to render any assistance. Yet they gave not up in despair, and although embarrassed by the debt of the former Church, they resolved to rebuild, and throw themselves upon the liberality of their friends abroad. They accordingly contracted for a building 70 feet long, and 52 feet wide. The building was speedily erected, and they are now struggling hard to meet the last payment.

---

At the close of the second volume of the Methodist Protestant, the receipts of the past year fell so greatly

short of the expenditures, that the book committee were compelled to make retrenchment. They accordingly engaged a single man, Rev. Dr. Daniel Davies, a member of the Maryland Annual Conference, to edit the third volume.

The affairs of the second volume at the close in June, 1836, stood thus ; number of subscribers, 1880, exclusive of exchange papers. Two thousand copies were printed weekly, which cost for paper, printing, editing, &c., \$3,151. Cash received during the year, on account of first and second volume, \$2,901. Balance due the committee, \$1,420, being money advanced over and above the receipts from subscribers. Many subscribers had not paid. Had all faithfully paid up their subscription, the paper would have been free from debt, and the committee in possession of a considerable sum with which to commence the third volume.

Many benevolent societies had been formed within the bounds of the respective Annual Conference districts, having for their object the immediate or remote aid of the itinerant ministers and preachers. Such as Preachers' Aid Societies, &c. The funds raised by these were appropriated to the aid of the conferences in making up deficiencies in the preachers' salaries. In many cases, had it not been for the assistance furnished by those societies, some of our most laborious ministers and preachers would have been compelled to leave the itinerant ranks, and labour in a more circumscribed field.

The Phebean Society of this city, and others of a similar character, composed altogether of females, have done much good in this way. Though they do not place their funds at the disposal of the conference, yet, the relief they have administered to individuals has been in

almost every case very efficient. The parent society in Baltimore, alone, exclusive of funds raised by auxiliaries, have contributed since their organization in 1830, the sum of twenty-eight hundred dollars, in sums of from ten to fifty dollars to each suffering brother who appeared to need their assistance. This society has also an invested capital of fifteen hundred and sixty-eight dollars, the annual interest of which is also employed in the same benevolent and praiseworthy manner.

Another valuable auxiliary, are those societies termed the "Superannuated Fund Societies." The design of these is the support of disabled and worn out ministers, their widows and orphans. The funds raised by these are generally invested in view of making them productive, and for safe keeping, against the time when they will be needed. We are yet a young community, and have not needed great help from this source, but as we advance the claims on this department will be more numerous. It should, therefore, be our special business to make the superannuated fund rich and ample, that our itinerant brethren may labour in confident expectation, that when they are no longer able to proclaim Christ crucified on a large scale, or when the Master of assemblies shall see proper to remove them from labour to reward, their widows and orphan children shall not want food, raiment and education.

The missionary fund is designed to assist in the support of home missionaries. These brethren labour in missionary stations, within the bounds of their respective districts, where regular circuits have not been formed, for the purpose of raising societies, and forming circuits to be attached to the conference, and supplied by regular appointments. These missions have

been signally successful, in the enlargement of our work, in spreading the principles of our Church government, and what is still better in bringing many souls to the knowledge of experimental and saving grace.

Several decided and praiseworthy efforts have been made by different Annual Conferences to institute and organize colleges or seminaries of learning, on the manual labour principles; but, from various causes, principally the want of means, no one of them has succeeded in the establishment of an institution of the kind. Virginia took the lead in this enterprise, but has not yet realized her apparently well founded expectations. The Ohio Conference succeeded so far as to purchase a farm at Lawrenceburg, Ia., and to erect a part of the necessary buildings, but these were destroyed by fire at the commencement of the year 1839. This catastrophe involved several of our brethren in serious loss, and has paralyzed every effort that might be made towards rearing up another institution of the kind, among our brethren in the whole western country. The Maryland Annual Conference has in operation a literary institution near the city of Baltimore, called the Windsor School, under the immediate direction of Dr. Francis Waters.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1838.—PROGRESS OF PROTESTANT METHODISM IN THE WEST.

A CONSTITUTIONAL majority of the Annual Conferences having recommended a change in the eighth article of the Constitution, so as to admit a session of the General Conference every fourth, instead of every seventh year, the second General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church assembled in Pittsburg, Pa., on the 15th May, 1838, and continued its session to the 24th instant.

The committee on elections and privileges reported the following names of members of the conference.

*Maryland Conference.*—William Kesley, Thomas H. Stockton, Luther J. Cox, William C. Lipscomb, E. Crutchley, John Clark, Thomas C. Brown and I. S. Zeiber.

*Virginia Conference.*—Dr. Finney and J. M. Smith.

*North Carolina Conference.*—Samuel J. Harris and L. H. B. Whitaker.

*Georgia Conference.*—R. Blount and Charles Kennan.

*Alabama Conference.*—Peyton L. Graves and B. S. Bibb.

*Tennessee Conference.*—R. W. Morris and J. L. Armstrong.

*Ohio Conference.*—B. W. Johnson, M. M. Henkle, William Disney, S. Bell, J. J. Amos and M. Lyon.

*Pittsburg Conference.*—A. Shinn, G. Brown, J. Elliott, E. Woodward, C. Springer, C. Avery, D. B. Dorsey, J. Cary, J. Bell, E. Haskins, T. McKeever, J. Barnes, W. Garrard and B. Connell.

*Pennsylvania Conference.*—A. Woolston and W. S. Stockton.

*New York Conference.*—T. W. Pearson, J. L. Ambler, William Wood and William Stead.

*Genesee Conference.*—Michael Burge and S. Beecher.

*Champlain Conference.*—Nathan Green.

*Vermont Conference.*—John Croker and A. Mc-Glaughlin.

*Boston Conference.*—John McLeish and W. Wyman.

*Illinois Conference.*—W. H. Collins and R. A. Shipley.

Rev. Asa Shinn was elected President, and Rev. T. W. Pearson, Secretary.

Committees, as usual, were appointed, one on the executive department; one on the judiciary; one on literary matters; one on boundaries; one on missions; on rules of order, &c. And subsequently a committee was appointed for the reception and consideration of paper sent to the conference on the subject of slavery.

At this conference, there was a particular examination made by the committees on the executive and judiciary departments of the discipline, but in their reports, they appear to have been not disposed to recommend any material changes in either of those departments, as will be seen by the following reports:

“The executive committee beg leave to report that they have examined with prayerful attention, the several resolutions, memorials, and suggestions, submitted to them, and are of opinion that although some minor points in the discipline might be altered to advantage, yet more would be lost by the innovations than would be gained by the amendments.

“Your committee therefore believe, that on the whole it would be much better, to allow our rules for the

present to remain as they are. In the general we esteem our Constitution and discipline to be excellent, and as they shall be better understood, and become more familiar to our ministers, and members, we have no doubt they will be more highly prized. Indeed your committee have no doubt that if they were vigilantly applied, and faithfully carried out, they would be quite sufficient to secure the peace and prosperity of the Church. Your committee believe that frequent changes have a tendency, not only to unsettle the minds and habits of our members, but also to destroy the confidence of the public, in the permanency of our institutions, as well as the piety and wisdom of our ministers and members. Your committee will therefore simply recommend to our brethren, especially our executive officers, and official bodies, to be more faithful in enforcing our rules; and to all, to be more diligent and uniform in obeying them.

On behalf of the committee,

W. KESLEY, *Chairman.*"

*Pittsburg, May 21, 1938.*

*Report of the Committee on the Judiciary.*

"The judiciary committee, having had the matters referred to them under careful consideration, have deemed it inexpedient to recommend any changes in the rules governing judicial investigations in the Methodist Protestant Church.

"On the special matter referred to the judiciary committee, they report the following, viz:

"*Resolved*, That the first paragraph of the eighth article of the Constitution be amended by substituting the word *fourth* in the room of the word "*seventh*." So as to authorize the General Conference of the Metho-



dist Protestant Church to meet every fourth year, and its next meeting to be the first Tuesday of May, 1842.

GEORGE BROWN, *Chairman.*"

The literary committee to whom was referred the communications of the book committee, reported a *plan* to raise a capital of \$20,000, for the establishment of a Church book concern.

PLAN.

1. Let there be a stock loan created of \$20,000, in shares of \$50 each; to be paid in five equal instalments at 60 days apart, the first payment to fall due on the 1st day of August, 1838. The stock thus raised to bear six per cent. interest, and to be redeemable on the 1st day of July, 1844.

2. Let the book committee, to be hereafter appointed by this Conference, be authorized to contract with the book company for so much of their stock and stereotype plates as they may deem advantageous to the Church.

3. Let the book committee be authorized to receive the charter of the book company on the following conditions: *First.* That no charge be made for it. *Second.* That the president and directors fill all vacancies occurring in their board with ministers or members of the Methodist Protestant Church, subject however to the approval of the Annual Conference of the district in which the book concern may be located.

4. That the book committee make an annual exhibit to the said Annual Conference, at each of its sessions, showing the true state and condition of the business, and that a full and particular account of all matters and things connected with this Church concern shall be submitted to the next General Conference.

5. That previous to the expiration of the present charter, the directors use their best efforts to obtain an extension of time, and such alterations in said instrument, as will best accord with the contemplated change from a company to a Church business and property.

6. Let an agent or agents be appointed by the committee to travel through all the conferences to dispose of the Church loan, and to solicit donations in view of purchasing out the stock so created and finally redeeming the loan.

7. After the year 1842, let it be the duty of the committee to make dividends from the profits arising out of the business, to the respective Annual Conferences, in proportion to the amount of actual capital invested by the respective conference districts.

8. Let the General Conference recommend, that the meetings of the respective Annual Conferences be held at such periods as will admit of an agent or agents, visiting them all in rotation.

9. Let the book committee have full powers to employ and remove an agent or agents as it may deem best, and to conduct the business with promptness and vigor, under such rules and regulations as shall hold it in strict responsibility to the Annual Conference of the district in which it may be located, as also to the General Conference.

10. The committee shall also have power to fill all vacancies in their own board, subject however to the approval of the Annual Conference, under whose supervision it immediately acts.

11. Should the book committee procure the charter of the present book company, or obtain one from the Legislature of the state, where the Concern is located,

then they shall act under the name, style and title of Directors, and perform such duties as may be assigned them.

The conference received and adopted the Plan, after examining and approving it article by article. The following named persons were then appointed the book committee: James R. Williams, Samuel K. Jennings, John Chappell, John Clark, Dr. Francis Waters, Luther J. Cox, Phillip S. Chappell, Beale H. Richardson, and the superintendents of Baltimore city, and East Baltimore stations. Thomas H. Stockton\* was elected editor of the periodical, the title of which was now changed to that of "The Methodist Protestant and Family Visiter."

The conference also recognized and sanctioned the Hymn Book, compiled by authority of the General Conference of 1834, as the Hymn Book of the Methodist Protestant Church. Some considerable excitement prevailed in the conference on the subject of slavery, but the question was finally referred to the people in their primary assemblies.

The committee on boundaries made their report, which was received, amended and adopted, as follows:

#### ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOUNDARIES.

1. *Maryland District.*—The Maryland District includes all the States of Maryland and Delaware, and the District of Columbia—all that part of Pennsylvania south of the Blue Mountains and east of the Alleghany Mountains—and Accomack, Northampton, Fairfax, Prince William, Loudon, Fauquier, Jefferson, Berkley, Frederick, Hampshire, and Hardy counties, of Virginia.

\*Brother Stockton subsequently resigned, and the book committee elected brother E. Y. Reese in his stead.

2. *Virginia District*.—The Virginia District includes all the State of Virginia not included in the Maryland and Pittsburg Districts, as fixed by the convention.

3. *North Carolina District*.—The North Carolina District includes all the State of North Carolina.

4. *Georgia District*.—As it now stands in the Book of Discipline.

5. *Alabama District*.—As it now stands in the Book of Discipline.

6. *Tennessee District*.—Includes all the States of Alabama and Mississippi north of a line drawn due west, from the ridge dividing the waters of the Mobile from Tennessee to the Mississippi river, all the State of Tennessee, and so much of the State of Kentucky as is south of the Kentucky river.

7. *Arkansas District*.—Includes all the State of Arkansas, and the counties of Stodard, Scott, Wayne, Ripley, Pulaski, Green, Polk and Barry, in the State of Missouri, and the Territories west thereof.

8. *Illinois District*.—Includes the State of Illinois, and so much of the State of Missouri as is not included in the Arkansas District, and the Northwestern and Missouri Territories, to the Rocky Mountains.

9. *Ohio District*.—Includes all the State of Indiana, and so much of the State of Ohio as is not included in the Pittsburg District, the State of Kentucky not included in the Tennessee District, and the State of Michigan.

10. *Pittsburg District*.—Includes the State of Ohio east of the Sciota and Sandusky rivers, including the counties of Crawford, Seneca and Sandusky, the States of Pennsylvania and Virginia west of the Alleghany Mountains and north of the Cumberland Mountains.

11. *Pennsylvania District*—Includes all the State of Pennsylvania north of the Blue and east of the Alleghany Mountains.

12. *New Jersey District*—Includes all those parts of New Jersey south of New York District.

13. *New York District*.—As it now stands in the Discipline, with the exception of New Jersey.

14. *Genesee District*.—As it now stands in the Discipline.

15. *Champlain District*.—As it now stands in the Discipline, except Essex county, which is added to the Vermont District.

16. *Vermont District*.—As it now stands in the Discipline, with the addition of Essex county from the Champlain District.

17. *Boston District*.—As it now stands in the Discipline.

Respectfully submitted,

E. WOODWARD, *Chairman*.

The number of Annual Conference districts had now increased to sixteen. The number of members in each, is put down in the following list. In several cases, however, the number is too low, as we were obliged in some instances for want of better information to take the numbers as reported in the minutes two and three years previously to the sitting of the General Conference.

Vermont District,	532
Boston       “	300
Champlain   “	505
Genesee     “	1,000
New York    “	1,780
Pennsylvania “	1,272
Maryland    “	4,012

Virginia District,	1,233
N. Carolina "	1,858
Tennessee "	1,400
Georgia "	1,076
Alabama "	1,000
Ohio "	3,900
Pittsburg "	7,280
Illinois "	500
Charleston Station,	300
	<hr/> 27,948

In the fall of 1838, a new periodical was gotten up in the West. A sketch of its history will be found in the following extract of a letter from the editor to the author, dated Zanesville, March 22d, 1842.

"The Pittsburg Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, which sat in Lancaster, Ohio, September, 1838, being sensible of the want of a medium to sustain the interests of the Church in the West, appointed a committee to inquire into the practicability of getting up a periodical for that purpose. The committee reported favourably on the necessity and practicability of publishing a paper of good size, provided it be well conducted and its columns open for fair discussion of all moral questions of importance, and for general intelligence, religious and political. The committee gave it as their opinion, that the paper should be gotten up on individual responsibility, and that the conference should have no control over it. They suggested the following as the principles, on which, if conducted, the conference ought to pledge themselves to sustain the paper:—1. That it be a free and not a party press. 2. That the paper be issued in folio form and not less than

super royal size. 3. That a portion of its columns be devoted to general intelligence, foreign and domestic, congressional news, agriculture, prices current and advertisements.. To all which the conference agreed, and passed the following resolution. '*Resolved*, That the Western conferences be requested to unite in this enterprise, by using all proper endeavours to sustain the paper.'"

"The subscriber, (C. Springer,) was then appointed to undertake the publication of the contemplated paper, to which he ultimately assented, on the condition that the conference would pass a resolution to hold its members, individually, responsible for the pledge it had made, to sustain the paper, he agreeing to hold himself responsible, to that body, for conducting the paper on the principles it proposed. With this proposition the conference complied, and in good faith, on the these agreements the first number of the "*Western Recorder*" was issued, on an imperial sheet, July 18, 1839. It began with about six hundred subscribers, and has now in the neighbourhood of fourteen hundred. The Ohio and Indiana conferences have rendered efficient support to the Recorder."

C. SPRINGER.

Our limits will not permit us to go into a detailed account of the extension and progress of the work during the four years which elapsed between the General Conference of 1838, and that of 1842. . And indeed if we had space for such an exhibit, the materials for the compilation are not to be obtained. There is, however, one paper, prepared and published by the president of the Ohio Conference district, which details the progress of our Church in the *West*. This we will insert in his own language, as a valuable part of our



History. It is probable, that in some future edition of this work, we may be put in possession of additional materials giving a history of the particular progress of our cause in other sections of the country. In the North, in the South, and the Middle States.

#### OUR CAUSE IN THE WEST.

*Mr. Editor*,—Some account of our condition and progress in the West, may be of interest to a portion of your readers.

The first session of the Ohio Annual Conference, under the Constitution, was held at Zanesville, October, 1831.\* The Ohio District then embraced, entire, the States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, Western Pennsylvania, Western Virginia, and the bordering parts of Kentucky and Missouri. At that conference were members present from six of the above named States. The following statistical data may be here set down :

*Ohio Conference, 1831, (embracing the entire West.)*

Circuits and Stations,	32
Itinerant ministers and preachers, . . . . .	48
Unstationed ministers and preachers, . . . . .	100
Members, . . . . .	5,600

In the year 1833, the conference was divided, and the Pittsburg District established, embracing Western Pennsylvania, and the eastern portion of Ohio.

In 1836, the Illinois District was set off, embracing the State of Illinois, and the bordering parts of Missouri.

In 1839, the Indiana District was set off, embracing the State of Indiana.

Thus it appears we have now four Annual Conference

\*Two sessions had been previously held in Cincinnati in 1829 and 1830, under the Conventional Articles of Association.

Districts embraced in the territory, which was, ten years ago, included in one Conference District.

To show what has been our progress within ten years, that is, up to the last sessions severally of the four Western Conferences, in the autumn of 1841, the following particulars of summary are here given :

*Ohio Conference, 1841.*

Circuits and Stations, . . . . .	19
Itinerant ministers and preachers, . . . . .	34
Unstationed ministers and preachers, . . . . .	68
Members, . . . . .	3,500

*Pittsburg Conference.*

Circuits and Stations, . . . . .	50
Itinerant ministers and preachers, . . . . .	85
Unstationed ministers and preachers, . . . . .	111
Members, . . . . .	10,341

*Indiana Conference.*

Circuits, . . . . .	10
Itinerant ministers and preachers, . . . . .	40
Unstationed ministers and preachers, . . . . .	31
Members, . . . . .	2,220

*Illinois Conference.*

Circuits, . . . . .	17
Itinerant ministers and preachers, . . . . .	38
Unstationed ministers and preachers, (1840,) . . . . .	22
Members, . . . . .	1,760

In summing up the whole, embraced as above, in the Ohio, Pittsburg, Indiana, and Illinois District, we find the result to be as follows:

Circuits and Stations, . . . . .	96
Itinerant ministers and preachers, . . . . .	197
Unstationed ministers and preachers, . . . . .	232
Members, . . . . .	17,821

In comparing this with the foregoing statement of the condition of the Ohio conference in 1831, it appears that within the ten years we have increased three-fold in the number of circuits and stations; four-fold in the number of itinerant preachers; and, from three to four-fold in the number of members.

It is also to be taken into account, that the General Conference at their last session, 1838, set off to the Tennessee conference a portion of Kentucky, then including two small charges, with some seven unstationed ministers.

Within a year or two past, our principles have taken root in *Michigan*. Societies have been springing up in some ten or twelve counties of that State. Three circuits there, were recognized by our last (Ohio) conference, numbering 250 members. To these, at least 200 more have been added the present year. There are now seven itinerant preachers in the field, and ten unstationed preachers within the same bounds. You had the politeness, Mr. Editor, to republish recently from the "Western Recorder," some account of my tour in this interesting region. By reason of the detached condition of our brethren there; their remoteness from the principal sphere of operations in the Ohio District, the establishment of a separate Annual Conference in Michigan, at no distant period, will be very desirable. And their cheering success and brightening prospects, would seem to justify such a measure.

It is pleasing to observe, that the seeds of our principles have, through emigration, been scattered abroad in the far western Territory of *Iowa*. Two families of firmness and enterprise, from Cincinnati, not long since located themselves at or near the new seat of govern-

ment, forming, as it were, a little colony. And now they have a Methodist Protestant Church in Iowa city, the first and only meeting house as yet erected in the place.

Did our people generally, in their removals abroad, manifest this firm adherence to the cause they have espoused, what a speedy extension and spread of our principles would take place throughout the entire country. Scarcely is there now, I presume, a county or village where may not be found some one or more individuals of our fellowship, who have been scattered abroad. But, forasmuch as we have no societies in the places of their new location, how often, in such case, do our people, as a matter of convenience, unite with some other branch of the Church. In this way we lose, I doubt not, hundreds of members in the West—and what is more surprising, many preachers also. You may conclude, Mr. Editor, that such could not have been very warmly attached to the cause. I would not pass any reflections upon such as deem this course necessary for the benefit of their families, or the salvation of their own souls. But I am persuaded that did our brethren generally, who remove beyond the limits of our present organizations, manifest such firmness and energy as did our friends at Iowa city, they might, in many instances, be instrumental in raising up societies in the places of their new location.

I have accomplished an entire round of visitation to the various charges in the Ohio District, since our last conference, and am happy to say, that our people generally are encouraged in witnessing in a greater or less degree, the prosperity of Zion among them. It has pleased God to bless the labours of our brethren, and to attend them with success. A gracious season of revival,

as you have been informed, has taken place in Cincinnati. In several of our circuits also, revivals and reformations have occurred. More than one thousand members have been added the present year, within our bounds. Two preachers have recently withdrawn from our connexion, but seven others have been employed since last conference. The number of meeting houses owned by our people within the district, is thirty-six, and I am happy to say, that a goodly number more are being erected the present year.

I remain, respectfully, your brother,

A. H. BASSETT,  
*Pres't Ohio Conference.*

*Chillicothe, Ohio, April 13, 1842.*

## CHAPTER XX.

### GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1842.

THE third General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church held its session in Baltimore, Maryland, in St. John's Church. Commencing on the 3d of May, 1842, and concluding on the 16th inst.

The following ministerial and lay representatives were in attendance.

#### *Pittsburg Annual Conference.*

##### MINISTERS.

A. Shinn,  
John Burns,  
George Brown,  
L. Ragan,  
J. Clarke, Jr.  
C. Springer.

##### LAYMEN.

Thomas Freeman,  
John Sonder,  
P. Lewis,  
James Clark.

*Ohio Conference.*

MINISTERS.

A. H. Bassett.

LAYMEN.

D. C. Carson,

J. Whetstone.

W. H. Collins.

*Illinois Conference.*

Samuel Butler.

*Mississippi Conference.*

*New York Conference.*

Thomas K. Witsil,  
Enoch Jacobs.

John J. Reed.

*Virginia Conference.*

J. G. Whitfield.

H. B. Woodhouse.

*Indiana Conference.*

H. P. Bennett,  
Thomas Hicklin.

William Smith,

John Burton.

*Tennessee Conference.*

No representatives in attendance.

*North Carolina Conference.*

Alexander Albright.

W. C. Whitaker,

R. C. Rankin.

*South Carolina Conference.*

A. McCaine.

*Alabama Conference.*

P. S. Graves.

B. S. Bibb.

*Georgia Conference.*

No representatives in attendance.

*Arkansas Conference.*

No representatives in attendance.

*Maryland Conference.*

Francis Waters,  
Augustus Webster,  
John S. Reese,  
Frederick Stier,  
James R. Williams,  
Wm. C. Lipscomb,  
Wm. H. Bordley,

Wm. S. Stockton,  
A. S. Naudain,  
Peter Light,  
E. Crutchley,  
J. B. Thomas,  
Alexander Waugh,  
Wm. Rusk.

*Pennsylvania Conference.*

John Smith.

*Boston Conference.*

Thomas F. Norris.

## HISTORY OF THE

*Onandaga Conference.*

## MINISTERS.

O. E. Bryant.

## LAYMEN.

L. B. Morris.

*Vermont Conference.*

Lewis T. Fish.

*Champlain Conference.*

No representatives in attendance.

*Genesee Conference.*

A. Pennell.

Thomas Barkley.

Whole number elected 80.—In attendance 51.

Rev. Asa Shinn was elected president, J. J. Reed and A. H. Bassett, secretaries.

The following synopsis embraces all the alterations and amendments of discipline made by the conference.

1. The Annual Conferences were authorized to leave a minister without an appointment for a year, at his own request.

2. Presidents of Annual Conferences were authorized to employ, or appoint, missionaries to take charge of new fields of labour.

3. Conference missionaries were authorized to take up public collections for their support, and when deficient, to be entitled to a dividend of the conference fund.

4. Superintendents were authorized, when there is not a quorum present to do business in Quarterly Conferences, to appoint the place, as well as the time, for holding the next session.

5. No new Annual Conference to be set off with less than eight hundred members, unless it be a frontier district, which, however, must include five hundred members.

6. Every Annual Conference, hereafter organized, is to report to the ensuing General Conference, the proofs of its legal and constitutional organization.



At this General Conference a special committee was raised to inquire into the expediency of forming an official correspondence with the Wesleyan Association, and other secedent Methodist denominations, in Great Britain. The report of that committee was as follows:

“The committee on the subject of official correspondence with the Wesleyan Association, and other secedent Methodist denominations in Great Britain, beg leave to recommend the appointment of a committee or board, to consist of six members—to wit: two stationed and two unstationed ministers, and two laymen, within the bounds of the Maryland Conference, whose duty it shall be to correspond with those bodies, and to report the result of such correspondence to their Annual Conferences, to whom they shall be responsible for their official acts. And also, further recommend, that all vacancies in said committee or board be supplied by their own act, subject, however, to their Annual Conference. And, lastly, that the said Annual Conference, with the concurrence of the Virginia Annual Conference, be empowered, if in the judgment of the two conferences, it be necessary or expedient to send a delegate or delegates, to be selected from any conference district in the Church, to attend the session of the said Wesleyan Association, or other official bodies of reformers, for the purpose of negotiating and establishing any practicable and proper terms of official intercourse and co-operation, for the advancement of the great ends of ecclesiastical liberty and the Gospel of Christ. The said Maryland Annual Conference to make a report of all its proceedings to the next General Conference.

ALEX’R McCAINE, *Chairman.*”

The following named persons constitute the committee or Board of Foreign Correspondence: Dr. S. K. Jennings, Dr. F. Waters, J. R. Williams, Benj. Richardson, B. H. Richardson, John Clark, Baltimore; and T. Taylor, of Virginia.

The last named member, was added to the committee on motion of brother Whitfield, of the Virginia conference.

Subsequently to the appointment of the committee on foreign correspondence, and previously to the organization of the board, a communication was received through Rev. Thomas H. Stockton, of Philadelphia, from Rev. W. Cooke, General Secretary of Missions of the Methodist New Connexion, in England, soliciting a mutual friendly intercourse by correspondence, or visitation, between the Methodist Protestant Church and that connexion. The letter is now in the hands of the committee, and has, doubtless, received that attention to which it is entitled. The intelligence that has been received respecting the character of the Methodist New Connexion, induces us to believe it a highly respectable and useful body. Its statistics, according to the "minutes of the *forty-fifth* Annual Conference," held at Halifax, May, 1841, may be thus briefly exhibited: Chapels, 307; societies, 361; circuit preachers, 110; local preachers, 873; members, in whole, 22,008. An account of the origination and leading features of this connexion will be found in a note, at page 40 of this History.

Some two or three days were employed, during the sitting of this General Conference, on a discussion of the merits of the slave question. Much deliberate and christian courtesy characterized the debate, with very

few exceptions. Taken as a whole, though irrelevant and out of place, the debate did credit to the conference, in the estimation of the numerous spectators who were present during the whole time of the discussion. It resulted in the passage of the following resolution; to which, however, some protests were recorded.

*“Resolved, That in the judgment of this General Conference, the holding of slaves is not under all circumstances a sin against God; yet in our opinion, under some circumstances it is sinful, and in such cases should be discouraged by the Methodist Protestant Church. This General Conference does not feel authorized by the constitution to legislate on the subject of slavery; and by a solemn vote, we present to the Church our judgment, that the different Annual Conferences respectively should make their own regulations on this subject, so far as authorized by the constitution.”*

We here subjoin, as a valuable historical document, the report of the book committee, laid before the General Conference of 1842, to which is appended the conference plan for the redemption of the loan authorized by the General Conference of 1838. -

*To the President and Representatives of the Methodist Protestant Church, in General Conference assembled:*

*Beloved Brethren,*—In accordance with the regulations of the General Conference, the book committee respectfully present the following report:

By reference to the proceedings of the General Conference of 1838, it will be seen that several important duties were imposed upon the book committee appointed by said conference, the most essential of which are hereinafter stated.

From the time of our organization as a Church, in 1830, up to 1838, our Church had no book concern; but was dependent upon the liberality and enterprise of a single individual, and an incorporated company, for a supply of books, and especially for the publication of our Hymn Book and Discipline,—thousands of which have been annually needed by our fellowship. The General Conference of 1838 determined to make a decided effort in view of establishing a Church book concern, which, though limited in its commencement, might, with judicious management, be greatly extended, and made an efficient auxiliary in aid of the finances of the respective Annual Conferences.

In view of this laudable object, the General Conference authorized the creating a loan of \$20,000, by issuing stock to that amount, in shares of \$50 each, bearing an interest of 6 per cent. per annum, payable semi-annually, and redeemable on July 1st, 1844. In obedience to this authority, the committee prepared and issued certificates of stock to the amount of \$10,600, signed on behalf of the Church, by James R. Williams, as chairman, and Beale H. Richardson, as secretary of the committee;—a specimen of which is herewith exhibited. The committee were also directed to engage an agent, or agents, to travel through the several districts for the purpose of selling the stock, and soliciting donations in aid of establishing the contemplated book concern; and of, finally, redeeming and cancelling the said stock debt of the Church.

Under instructions adapted to these ends, the late Rev. Samuel J. Harris, was employed and visited several of the southern districts. The nett proceeds of his efforts were as follows:—

Sale of Church scrip—none.

Donations in stock of the BOOK COMPANY, . . . \$875

Donations in cash, . . . . . 932

---

\$1,807

The committee were also authorized to purchase of the book company, such books and stereotype plates as might be deemed advantageous to the Church. In pursuance of this authority, they purchased of the company Books to the amount of . . . . . \$1,200

Stereotype plates of Clarke's Commentary, . . . 8,600

---

\$9,800

To this were added the proceeds of the donations made to the Church, through the efforts of former travelling agents—the Rev. Thomas H. Stockton, Augustus Webster, and the late William Kesley—which had been invested with the book company, amounting to \$2,871, all of which was paid to the committee in books, making a capital of \$4,071, in books, and \$8,600 in plates. On this small capital was the Church book concern instituted.

The limited success of the travelling agent, together with the small demand for books, soon convinced the committee that it would be impracticable to work the plates of the Commentary without borrowing additional funds, and thus incurring a responsibility unauthorized by the General Conference. They therefore determined to propose to the Directors of the book company a return, or surrender of the plates, which proposal was favorably received by the company; and the following terms were agreed on:

1st. The plates to be returned to the company at the price for which they were purchased by the committee, but to remain in possession of the committee as security for the payment of the Church scrip, which had been passed over to the company for their purchase, and paid away by the company in settlement of individual claims of their creditors.

2dly. The book company to redeem this scrip in twelve months, return it to the committee and take the plates. But in the event of the company's failing so to do, the committee to be at liberty to sell the plates on account of the company, and apply the avails to the redemption of the scrip.

3dly. The committee to pay the interest on the scrip received and passed away by the company, up to November, 1839; and to receive the plates of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History as security for the repayment of said interest, with authority to sell them, if the company should fail to refund the same.

The committee paid the interest up to the period named, and hold the plates of Mosheim in pledge,—as also the plates of Clarke, as security for the redemption of the scrip. Such has been the state of the times, that neither the company nor the committee have been able to effect a sale of the plates. They now remain, awaiting the disposal of the present conference. It is the opinion of the committee, that, if ways and means can be devised to redeem the scrip, the Church ought to own the plates. They are in good condition, especially the plates of the Old Testament, which are in all respects equal to new plates, only a small number of copies having ever been worked off from them. They cost

the company \$10,500. The plates of Mosheim are also in fine condition, and originally cost \$2,500.

The General Conference of 1838, authorized the committee to clothe itself with corporate powers, by adopting the company's charter, or procuring one from the Legislature of Maryland, adapted to their condition as a Church concern. They pursued the latter course, and procured a charter in January, 1840.

Since the last General Conference, the committee have issued three editions of the Hymn Book, amounting to 14,000 copies, and five editions of the Discipline, amounting to 4,000 copies. Many miscellaneous books have been sold, and generally paid for. The concern may be considered as having reached a point, at which its difficulties are nearly all overcome. If properly managed and liberally patronized, it will unquestionably be productive, and yield a handsome revenue to the Church. Sales to the amount of \$12,000 have been made; of which \$9,500 have been received, leaving outstanding the sum of \$2,500 all of which is believed to be good, with the exception perhaps, of \$209.

#### THE PAPER.

The General Conference of 1838 also directed a continuance of the Church periodical, under a new name and form. The title was changed from "Methodist Protestant" to "The Methodist Protestant and Family Visitor," and the form from *quarto* to *folio*. It was to be edited and published in the city of Baltimore, under the editorial care of Rev. Thomas H. Stockton, and the nett proceeds to be applied towards raising a fund for a book concern. Brother Stockton resigned the appointment soon after the adjournment of the conference, and as the conference is aware, brother E. Y.



Reese was subsequently appointed to fill the vacancy. The committee proceeded with no small degree of anxiety in the publication, on account of the large amount of delinquencies among the subscribers, and the heavy debts due upon the preceding volumes;—no less than \$1,800 of borrowed money being due to persons who had stepped generously forward, in the hour of need, and by personal sacrifices sustained the publication. We present a brief statement of each volume under the charge of the present committee.

Volume 5th was sent to about 1550 subscribers.

Its receipts to this time have been	\$3,862 44
Its expenses	3,679 26

---

Leaving as the nett gain or profit	\$183 18
------------------------------------	----------

Volume 6th was commenced with an improvement in the size and general appearance, as compared with the 5th. The number of subscribers with which it commenced, was 1880.

Its receipts have been	\$3,932 78
Its expenses	3,427 82

---

Its clear profit	\$504 96
------------------	----------

Volume 7th underwent no change in form or appearance. It commenced with 1950 subscribers.

Its expenses have been	\$3,704 10
Its receipts	3,678 15

---

Present deficiency (which is reduced weekly)	\$25 95
--	---------

From the amount of receipts for the 7th volume as compared with those of the 6th, it is manifest that a

much larger amount of clear surplus will be received on account of it, than has been on account of the 6th.

The 8th volume in all respects resembles the 6th and 7th. At its commencement it had 2000 subscribers. It has reached its 41st number. Its expenses are estimated at \$3,200. Its receipts thus far have been \$2,018.

Large amounts are still due on account of the present volume, and considerable sums on account of the two former volumes. Taking the past as an earnest, a large proportion of these arrearages will be collected.

The debt of \$1,800 mentioned as due on the volumes of the paper published between 1834 and 1838, has been met in the following way. The committee borrowed from the Phœbean Society of Baltimore, \$800, for which they gave Church scrip, on this they have regularly paid the interest; they borrowed \$300 from an individual, paying the interest punctually, and the remaining \$700 they have paid out of the proceeds of the paper, after all its current expenses had been defrayed.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES R. WILLIAMS, *Chairman.*

CHAS. W. RIDGELY, *Secretary.*

May 6, 1842.

*General Conference plan for raising an amount sufficient to redeem the Church Scrip authorized by the General Conference of 1838.*

"1. Each Annual Conference to raise a sum of money equal to fifty cents for each member within the limits of its District.

"2. Transmit said amount, when raised, to the book committee, who shall forward, free of risk and expense of transportation, to the respective conferences, an equivalent in such books as may be directed, at retail prices.

“3. The plan to be published by the book committee officially in our periodical, and at our request in our other papers, and its necessity and propriety urged upon our entire membership.”

---

## CHAPTER XXI.

### REMARKS ON THE CONSTITUTION.

THE convention changed the order of the articles as reported by the committee, and commenced with the lowest points of organization, and thus rose to the higher departments of legislative, executive, and judicial. Though this is what may be termed the natural order of the system, yet, at times, as we have seen in the General Conference, some brethren have been at a loss, for the moment, to distinguish clearly, what parts of the constitution are properly legislative, what executive, and what judicial. To remedy this apparent inconvenience we will class the respective articles as nearly as may be under the respective heads of Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

The *Legislative* department. To this belong the following articles; eight, nine, ten, sixteen, and seventeen.

The *Executive* department. To this belong articles; three, four, five, six, seven, eleven, and twelve.

The *Judiciary* department. To this belong articles; thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen.

The second article relates to the terms of membership and probationary privileges.

The Annual Conferences, and Quarterly Conferences, though *executive* bodies, have, nevertheless, a portion of judicial authority conferred on them; each having appellate jurisdiction; but the General Conference is purely *legislative*, having neither executive nor appellate jurisdiction. To the Annual Conferences there is also, a small amount of legislative authority granted, as may be seen by reference to the third and fourth sections of article seven.

The basis on which the government of the Methodist Protestant Church is founded, embraces two very important particulars. First; "The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church, and the Word of God is the sufficient rule of faith and practice in all things pertaining to godliness."

Secondly; "A written constitution establishing the form of government, and securing to the *ministers and members* of the Church their rights and privileges, on an equitable plan of *representation*, is *essential* to, and the best safeguard of christian liberty." The general principles of the system as developed in the elementary principles and constitution, sustain, in our judgment, a most equitable adjustment of Church rights and privileges, alike guarding the interests of the ministers and members; and, in connection with the disciplinary regulations prescribed for both, are admirably calculated to secure to the entire fellowship, Gospel morality, fervent devotion, and christian freedom.

Reformers have always deemed a written constitution, defining the rights and privileges of the ministers and members of the Church, and establishing the form of government, indispensably necessary to the obtainment and perpetuity of christian liberty. Without this,

serious encroachments will be made on the liberties of the people, their rights disregarded, and their claims to equal justice silenced by ministerial authority.

When all hope of change in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church was lost—and when circumstances placed it in the power of the Reformers to lay the ground-work of a government suited to their views, and in accordance with the unalienable rights and privileges of the ministers and members of their fellowship, they commenced by framing a constitution, and publishing it to the world as the instrument under which *they* proposed to be governed. This is preceded by a set of fundamental principles termed “elementary.” These constitute the basis upon which the constitution rests. They assert Christ to be the only *Head* of the Church, and the Word of God, the only rule of faith and conduct; that every one has a right to private judgment in religious matters, and an equal right to express his opinions in any way which will not violate the laws of God, or the rights of his fellow men. That Church trials should be conducted on Gospel principles only; and that no person should be excommunicated except for immorality, the propagation of unchristian doctrines, or for the neglect of duties enjoined by the Word of God. That no person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and obeys the Gospel of “God our Saviour,” ought to be deprived of Church membership. They assert, that the right to make rules and regulations for the government of the Church, inheres conjointly in the ministers and members thereof: and that the Church has a right to form and enforce such rules and regulations *only*, as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and tend to carry into effect the great system of practical Christi-

anity. And, moreover, that so much of the power of the Church inherent in the ministers and members, as may be requisite for its due government and administration, may be delegated by them, from time to time, as they may judge necessary, by the medium of representation through a General Convention. That it is obligatory on the Church to secure all her official bodies the necessary authority for the purposes of good government; but that she has no right to create any authority equal to her own, which may act independently of her, or contravail her own acts or provisions. Ministers are required to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties, to maintain godliness, and oppose all moral evil. The same obligation to godliness and opposition to evil, are imposed on the members of the Church; and they are declared to be under obligation to render to the ministers of the Gospel a righteous compensation for their labours.

The elementary principles may be viewed as a bill of rights, and their declaration in this form, is highly important as a guide to the Church in all her future deliberations and proceedings, whether they be conventional or legislative. These bind her to the laws of Christ—secure the rights of private judgment and the expression of opinion—protect Church membership—declare the principles on which Church trials shall be conducted—guard against unrighteous excommunications—point out the residence of legitimate authority to make and enforce rules and regulations—and enjoin on ministers and members the faithful discharge of all those duties so clearly enforced in the Sacred Scriptures.

The title by which the Association of Reformers is designated, is; “*The Methodist Protestant Church, com-*

*prising the Associated Methodist Churches.*" By this title, it will be seen, that our Church is not a unit, but an association of many Churches. These are all duly represented in one general legislature, termed the General Conference, and its enactments are binding on all the Churches represented in that assembly.

The title METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH, is peculiarly appropriate.

1. "*Methodist*"—The Church is methodistic in every respect, except in her form of government, which is *representative*. The Methodist Protestant Church receives and teaches the doctrines of the Gospel as taught by John Wesley, John Fletcher, Joseph Benson and Dr. Adam Clarke. She has adopted the same simple mode of worship so prevalent in all Methodist Churches, which consists in singing a hymn; the people standing with their faces towards the minister—extemporaneous prayer; the congregation kneeling—and preaching—after which another hymn is sung—then prayer, and the ordinary benediction. She also recognizes the following means of grace: "The public worship of Almighty God, searching the Scriptures, the Lord's Supper, love-feasts, class-meetings, private and family prayer." These she enforces by disciplinary regulations well calculated to secure their due observance.

2. "*Protestant*"—No distinctive epithet can be more suitable than that of *Protestant*. This title is as applicable to the Methodist Reformers in this country as it was when originally given to the Elector of Saxony and the other German Princes, who, in 1529, protested against the decree of the Diet of Spire, which, under the management of Charles V., acting in subservience to Pope Clement VII, declared every change unlawful



which should be introduced into the doctrine, discipline or worship of the established religion of Rome. The Protestants of reformed Europe rejected the superstitious domination of papal jurisdiction, and the Methodist Reformers reject the assumptions of Episcopal Methodism, as unauthorized by the Word of God, dangerous to civil liberty and destructive of religious freedom. On a former occasion we summed up in one comprehensive sentence our general *protest*, which we will here repeat. To the principles and leading features of the Methodist Episcopal Church government—to the unwarrantable assumptions of her itinerant ministers—to their unlimited and unamenable power—to their total exclusion of the people and local ministers from all participation in the formation of those rules and regulations by which they are to be governed—to the decided hostility of the travelling preachers to a *representative* form of Church government—to the violent acts of maladministration committed by them—to their opposition to the freedom of speech and the press—and to their monopolizing and selfish policy, reformers have for many years objected, and do *most deliberately and solemnly* PROTEST, as anti-christian and unrighteous.

3. "*Church*"—This term in the title of the Methodist Protestant Church is also peculiarly appropriate. We hold, that in a governmental point of view, no organization of religious people who are deprived of representation or personal participation, can be considered a Church. The very act that severs the laity from the ministry, and places all power in the hands of the ministers, changes the character of both—the ministers become masters, and the people slaves, the organization is unscriptural, and no longer entitled to the name of a Church.

The Methodist Protestant Church recognizes the rights and secures the interests of both ministers and laymen, by granting an equal representation to both. By this measure, made permanent under constitutional law, the entire association is represented, and the ministers and people become one Church. The same principle is seen throughout all the ramifications of the system, from the General Conference down to the leaders meetings. The legislative, executive and judicial departments are kept *distinct*, and in each and all of them, the laity have their due weight with the ministers: and the property of the Churches, such as houses of worship and burial grounds, &c., are owned by those who paid for them, or are in their immediate possession. So that the Methodist Protestant Church is an association of Churches, fully entitled to the appellation of "*Church*." And thus, in the most appropriate and legitimate manner, we claim the title of "the Methodist Protestant Church, comprising the associated Methodist Churches."

There is one only condition previously required of those who apply for membership in an associated Methodist Church, viz:—*A desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with an avowed determination to walk in all the commandments of God blameless.*" A requirement more perspicuous, more essential and more scriptural could not be made. Any condition below this, presented to the mind of an adult, would be disgraceful to christianity, and ruinous to the Church of Christ. This is beginning at the *lowest* step; the constitution however, does not leave the applicant at this point, for it immediately adds; "but those who may continue members *must give evidence* of their desire and determi-

nation by conforming to such rules of moral discipline as the Word of God requires."

The constitution also recognizes a probationary state before admission to full membership. This provision is designed to furnish the necessary time for those who have been received on trial to give evidence of the *sincerity* of their desire to flee from the wrath to come, and the *firmness* of their determination to walk in all the commandments of God blameless. We have always viewed this probationary regulation as necessary and wholesome. For while it gives the probationer ample time to test and evince his moral integrity and the power of divine grace, it protects the Church from imposition, and secures the confidence of the membership in his stability.

It is here proper to say, this is one of the good things we received from our brethren of the old Church. But even here we have improved upon their practice, and upon their system, their *system* gives to the preacher in charge the power to judge when a probationer may be safely received into full membership: and, their *practice* of submitting cases to the leaders meetings, (all the members of which are the officers of the preacher,) places him under no obligation to adopt their decision. The system places him above them; and their vote cannot give the case under consideration a different issue from the direction of his will. In the Methodist Protestant Church the power to receive into full membership is placed in the hands of the people or their representatives the leaders.

Provision is also made for the probationary membership of the children. "The children of our members, and those under their guardianship, shall be recognized

as enjoying probationary privileges, and held as candidates for membership; and may be put into classes, as such, with the consent of their parents or guardians."

This provision secures to the children of the members a probationary membership—the especial attention of the superintendent of each circuit and station—their organization into classes, and such instructions in the principles and duties of the christian religion as are suited to their respective capacities. This is of the first importance, both as it regards the welfare of the children, who are entitled to membership in virtue of the initiatory ordinance of baptism, and, as it regards the obligation which the Church, in conformity to the injunctions of the Scriptures, is laid under to train up the rising generation in the knowledge and practice of the divine law. To withhold the privilege of incipient membership from our children, or to neglect their organization and instruction in righteousness, should be regarded as a gross violation of Christ's command, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." The superintendent, therefore, who neglects his duty in this particular, should be made to feel the displeasure of the Church. Pains should also be taken to let the children perceive, that they are members of the Methodist Protestant Church; and, consequently, under obligation to walk circumspectly as becomes the children of pious parents and as probationary members. Children thus properly attended to, grow up with a hedge around them; feel a common interest with the Church of their parents; and finally, take their places when these are removed from labour to rest: while those for whom no efficient initiatory Church membership is provided, generally feel as

if cast off, and at perfect liberty to go where they please, and do what they choose; the consequence is, that most of them gradually slide into other congregations, or run into open rebellion against God; few of them, comparatively speaking, ever unite in christian fellowship with the Church of their fathers.

It must be admitted by all, that Methodists of every description have been more given to *proselyting* than to building up those whom they have gathered, or training their children in the knowledge and practice of christian and social duties. This is an evil chargeable on the old Methodist system in its origin. Mr. Wesley's societies were not Churches, but societies within the established Church of England, therefore the baptism of children, and their consequent introduction into the society, and their training as members, was not attended to by him and his associates. Mr. Asbury, in 1784, adopted Mr. Wesley's system, though unsuited to a Church existence, and left the children out, although he made provision for their baptism; which by the way, carries with it the absurdity of performing the initiatory ordinance, and withholding the benefits designed to be conferred by it. And what makes this the more astonishing is, that as late as the year 1798, he and Dr. Coke, in their remarks on the discipline and doctrines of the Church, say, under the article baptism, after quoting some passages of Scripture relating to infants, "The preceding Scriptures evidently demonstrate that the little children were entitled to all the privileges of the kingdom of glory, and of necessary consequence, to all the privileges of the kingdom of grace. They must *therefore* be entitled to the *benefits* of the ordinance

which initiates the members of Christ's kingdom into his Church below."

Class meetings have been continued among Methodists of all descriptions to the present day. And the Methodist Protestant Church adopted them, in the most solemn and binding manner. With us they are a *conventional* and *constitutional* arrangement, as much so as the provisions for the formation of districts, circuits, stations and Churches; and *cannot* be dispensed with, except in violation of constitutional law, and a palpable breach of good faith. Their adoption was not accidental, as with Mr. Wesley, but the result of the deliberate and decisive action of all the associated Churches, by means of their representatives in general convention assembled. And hence, the special legislation in view of their faithful observance, and their binding character on all the members of the associated Churches.—We here take pleasure in bearing our testimony in favour of class meetings. They doubtless are, most interesting and valuable means of grace, admirably calculated to instruct, comfort, encourage and unite in christian fellowship, the people of God.—They have unquestionably been productive of great and lasting good to Methodists of all descriptions. As it regards the spirituality and purity of the Churches, there are no meetings so well calculated to secure these most desirable and vital objects. We are aware, that to some they are monotonous and irksome, but to those who sincerely desire to attain a correct knowledge of their own real character and condition, to grow in grace, and be useful to their fellow class mates, and to the Church of God, these meetings are truly interesting and profitable. As Mr. Wesley said, at the origin of class meetings, "*this is the*

*thing, the very thing we need,*" to instruct the babes in Christ, to encourage the wavering, to fortify the weak, to comfort the afflicted, to detect and reclaim the disorderly, and to promote the spirituality of the whole Church.

The constitution makes provision for dividing the whole territory embraced by the Methodist Protestant Church into districts, circuits and stations. And, furthermore, another division is recognized, which is that of individual Churches. Here it is worthy of remark, that the division into districts, circuits and stations, relate to territory; but to individual Churches is assigned no territorial limits. The constitutional definition of one of these is, "An Associated Methodist Church shall be composed of any number of members residing sufficiently near each other to assemble statedly for public worship, and to transact its temporal business." Every such society is recognized as an individual Christian Church—as holding its own property, and is only restricted in self-government, in consequence of its relation to the Association as one of the branches of the Methodist Protestant Church. Hence, each individual Church is declared to have power to admit persons into full membership, and to try, censure, or expel unworthy members, *in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and the rules of discipline.*

As this constitutes the *first* step and the *basis* of Church freedom and representation, it will be proper to dwell on it, and call attention to the fact, that this Church individuality has its foundation in the Scriptures; for in Apostolic times, there were many *distinct* and *individual* Churches, enjoying all the rights and privileges of *free* Churches.



For more than three hundred years after Christ, the respective Churches managed their own affairs, respectively. Nothing is plainer in the Sacred Scriptures, than the facts, that there was in Apostolic times a plurality of Churches ; that these were local assemblies, composed of laymen and ministers;—that each Church possessed an identity of existence ; had its own officers, and managed its own affairs according to the circumstances by which each one was surrounded ; and, that the only bond of union was charity and similarity of faith. They were all distinct christian Churches, acknowledging Christ alone as their Head, and their sister Churches as their equals. The only deference paid to any individual Church, was that at Jerusalem, on account of its age and intelligence, which gave it the precedence, and entitled its judgment, in religious matters, to great respect.

But even at Jerusalem, the first Christian Apostolic Church, as we have shown at page 65, the most weighty matters were discussed and decided by the whole assembly, composed of Apostles, elders and brethren ; the Apostles themselves taking part in the debate, in common with the elders and private christians.

The principle of independent, free, individual Churches, associated for the purposes of united effort in sustaining each other, and of promoting the general interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom by the spread of the Gospel, is that on which the Methodist Protestant Church has based her organization. From this association of free Churches, springs her system of Church *representation*, by which every Church is secured in her rights and privileges, and the whole body can act under-

standingly, unitedly and with great effect, without the aid of lords over God's heritage.

*On this basis of mutual rights and free and independent Churches; rests the doctrine of representation.* Methodist Protestants have taken this scriptural feature as their starting place: and, for the purposes of sustaining and assisting each other, and securing a union of effort in spreading the Gospel of Christ, have organized an association of Churches. We do not say, there is to be found in the Scriptures a satisfactory example of Church government on the representative principle; but we find the elements of Church freedom on every hand, and the most positive prohibitions against all assumptions of authority, on the part of ministers, to the lording it over God's heritage.

The most superficial examination of the constitution and discipline of the Methodist Protestant Church, will convince every one, that the projectors of the system had the two following objects in view: First, the establishment of an equitable REPRESENTATION from the ministers and members of the Associated Churches. And secondly, the organization of a well adjusted, efficient and responsible ITINERANCY. The first of these, namely, *representation*, was a paramount consideration with reformers; which, while in the Methodist Episcopal Church, they claimed, petitioned for, and would be satisfied with nothing short of it. Knowing, that where representation does not lie at the foundation of civil or religious associations, there can be no liberty, no equality, no security for civil rights or religious freedom. The second, namely, an efficient, *responsible itinerancy* was an object of great solicitude with reformers: Many of them had spent their best days in the itinerancy,

and all of them had contributed to support the system, though they knew it was based on unrighteous principles, and subversive of the rights and privileges of the whole body of the laity, and all the local ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Now, though we do not say, there is Scripture warrant or example, for either representation or itinerancy, we nevertheless believe, that both are allowable to the christian Church: and, that where an association or confederation of Churches for mutual aid and edification exists, representation is *indispensible*. The condition of reformers previously to their association was the following—They existed in small free Churches all over the country, and regulated their respective concerns by such rules as they deemed most suitable to their peculiar situation. In this isolated condition they were unable individually to resist the powerful efforts put forth by their persecuting mother to crush, disperse and destroy them; and they were equally unable in their separate condition to accomplish that amount of good they believed to be their imperative duty. An association of Churches, based on an equitable representation, possessed of a well appointed and unexceptionable itinerancy, appeared to the minds of our brethren as absolutely *essential* to the *protection* and *usefulness* of both ministers and members.

Under these views they assembled a convention of representatives from all the Churches, and framed a written constitution, unalterable in its most important features, except by a future convention: and which limits and controls the legislature, and confines the different departments to their respective spheres of action.

Here, however, we would have it distinctly understood, that when we speak of *legislation* under the constitution, we mean nothing more than the formation of human rules and regulations for the purpose of carrying into effect the laws of Christ; or, as the constitution has it, "such rules and regulations only, as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and may be necessary or have a tendency to carry into effect the great system of practical christianity." None of these can be recognized as of equal authority with the Word of God; nor may they contravene the divine law; neither dare we attach to their infringement penalties which would effect the membership or christian privileges of the brethren. In either case, such regulations would defeat their own object, which is not to add or take from the laws of God, or to supersede them, but to carry them into effect. An instance of unjustifiable legislation, which can be viewed as no smaller crime than that of passing laws equal in authority with the Scriptures, may be found in the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church: "Let him who has charge of the circuit exclude them (in the Church) shewing that they are laid aside for *a breach of our rules of discipline, and not for immoral conduct.*"

Previously to entering more particularly upon our system of representation and itinerancy, it will be proper to notice one very important principle of the constitution in the distribution of power. The General Conference, which is the sole legislative body of the Church, is composed of an equal number of ministers and lay representatives, each part having a check on the other by means of a separate vote. Now, although in a single Church this would be inadmissible, yet in an asso-

ciation of Churches, this division of power was deemed essential to the interest of religion. Very important duties are committed to the ministers of the Gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ; such as the teaching and the oversight of the flock, and a suitable amount of executive authority. It would therefore, be improper to place the ministry in a situation that would give a controlling influence to the laity. The least that could be done, was to place them on a par with the lay representatives, that they might not be deprived of their just right and authority in the deliberative councils of the Church. And on the other hand, it would be equally injudicious to place the laity in a situation which would give the ministry undue authority over them. *A conjoint action of these two classes is essential to the best interests of the community.*

The right of suffrage in the Methodist Protestant Church embraces every minister, preacher and laymen in full membership, who has attained to the age of twenty-one years. And eligibility to election as a representative to the General Conference, is extended to every minister and preacher and every white, lay, male member, in full communion and fellowship, having attained to the age of twenty-five years, and having been in full membership two years. Here the ministers and members have the right of suffrage and eligibility to office secured to them, and no General Conference is clothed with power to infringe in the smallest degree upon those rights; for an express prohibition is found in the tenth article, which declares that; "No rule shall be passed which shall infringe the right of suffrage or eligibility to office,—as provided by the constitution."

We have heard some persons make a distinction between a minister of the Gospel and a *pastor*; and argue, that no minister can be acknowledged as a pastor except he have the special charge of a single congregation. We cannot for a moment admit this distinction, because, it is at variance with the Word of God, and the letter and spirit of our constitution.

The Scriptures nowhere give sanction to the notion of *one* minister being the exclusive pastor of one flock, while all others in the Church are subordinate and inferior. The term "pastor," occurs only *once* in the New Testament as designative of a minister of the Gospel, and then it is employed to point out a description of spiritual *teachers* in the Church of God. "And he gave some Apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some *pastors* and teachers." Eph. 4. 11. It is evident from the enumeration of Church officers made by Paul in 1 Cor. 12. 28, that *pastors* and *teachers* mean the same designation of officers. "And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

No mention is here made of pastors, but its equivalent, teachers. Moreover, nothing is clearer than the fact, that there existed at the same time a *plurality* of ministerial elders in each primitive Church; and, that these were the chief ministers in the congregation, who laboured harmoniously and jointly in the same Church. When Paul touched at "Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders* (*presbuteroi*) of the Church." And after speaking of his labours and sufferings, and the prospect of bonds and afflictions which lay before him, he charged them as *fellow labourers together* in the

word and doctrine, to take heed unto themselves and all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them *overseers*, to feed the Church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood.

If the modern notion of pastor and pastoral charge were scriptural, Paul would, doubtless, have sent to Ephesus for the *pastor* of the Ephesian Church, and not for the *elders*. And if diocesan episcopacy were scriptural, he would have sent for the *bishop*. But as neither the one nor the other is in accordance with the Scriptures, or known in that day as chief ministers, Paul sent for the *elders*. Many persons have been so long accustomed to the language of *hierarchies*, and to the practice of having one minister to preach to one congregation, that the notions of pastor and pastoral charge are inseparable in their minds, and altogether, as they suppose, scriptural.

The spirit and letter of our constitution, give a correct and scriptural view of this matter. For while it recognizes the elements of christian liberty in the identity of Churches, it does, by conventional compact, distribute the labours of the ministers, and views them all as fellow labourers in the word and doctrine; and requires of each, such pastoral or ministerial services as his situation in life will allow. Nor is there found in the system the least degree of partiality or proscription. Each minister is eligible to enter the itinerant ranks, without serving a probation, and when his engagement or period of service is completed, he is at liberty to retire without forfeiting his ministerial character, or incurring the censure of his brethren, and take a more circumscribed field of labour.



Representation in the Annual Conferences differs materially from that of the General Conference. The representation in the latter body is a *ministerial* and *lay* representation, consisting of an equal number of ministers and laymen, who are the representatives of the ministers and laymen of the whole Church. The representation in the Annual Conference is *not* a representation of ministers and laymen, but a representation of the respective circuits and stations of the district, comprising all descriptions of persons in Church fellowship. This distinction should be carefully borne in mind, if we wish to understand the peculiarities of our system, and avoid the confusion a misapprehension and miscalling of these things will produce in the minds of the people and preachers.

The business of the General and Annual Conferences is also dissimilar. It is the province of the General Conference to make rules and regulations for every department of the Church: but to the Annual Conferences no power to legislate is given, except the formation of a few rules necessary to their existence and continuance—to make such special rules and regulations as the peculiarities of the district may require—to prescribe and regulate the mode of stationing the ministers and preachers within the district—to make its own rules and regulations for the admission and government of coloured members, and to make for them such terms of suffrage as the Annual Conferences respectively may deem proper.

The General Conference is the *legislature* of the Church; and the Annual Conferences are *executive* or *working* bodies. The former is the law-making department; the latter are the working departments of the

Church, and have a representation peculiar to their character and business.

The organization of the Annual Conferences is simply an *improvement* on the composition of those in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so as to admit a representation from the circuits and stations, and to give to the people a voice in stationing the preachers.

The principal improvements consist in the annual election of *delegates* by the circuits and stations, equal in number and authority with the itinerant ministers, possessed of a check power by a separate vote: and the stationing power being placed in the hands of the conference, by which means the circuits and stations participate in the act of stationing as well as the preachers who are stationed: and thus exercise the right of selecting their ministers, so far as that can be done consistently with a regular and periodical change of ministers. These improvements involve principles of great consequence to the whole Church. By means of her delegates, the Methodist Protestant Church has a voice in the admission, government, and examination of the characters and abilities of the itinerant preachers: and, also, in the formation of rules for raising money to meet the expenses of the itinerancy. Without this, we should have what obtains in the old Church, taxation without representation; preachers admitted and stationed by themselves, without the smallest participation on the part of the circuits and stations.

If any object to the term *taxation*, it will avail nothing. The preachers must be paid, and the people must raise the money, or suffer in their credit as a religious community. The allowance is fixed and must be forthcoming, and is, therefore, fully equivalent to taxation.

There are several other important improvements on the old system, but we shall not notice them in this place.

The composition of the Annual Conferences is of a mixed character, partly representative and partly not, as is seen from the article authorizing their organization. The ministers under the stationing authority are empowered to take seats in virtue of that relation. This appeared indispensably necessary. As each of these are to receive an appointment from the conference to labour on some circuit or station, or missionary field—to render an account of their labours during the past year—to undergo an examination of their official character and duties—to receive an appointment for the ensuing year, and to exercise their right of appeal when necessary, it was, therefore, deemed indispensable that they all be admitted to membership in the Annual Conference. But as there were other interests to be consulted as well as those of the itinerant ministers, each of the circuits and stations were authorized to elect and send up to conference, *delegates* equal in number and power with the itinerant ministers, to represent and guard the interests of the unstationed ministers and the members of the respective circuits and stations. These delegates constitute the true and only representatives in the Annual Conferences, and may be selected from the unstationed ministers and preachers, or from the lay brethren. Though the itinerant ministers have equal power in a vote with the delegates, they cannot be considered in the light of delegates from the circuits and stations, unless we admit the absurd notion of representation where there is no election.

In pursuing the subject of representation, we must not omit to notice the leaders meetings and Quarterly Conferences. These were borrowed from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, so far as their composition is concerned, they are nearly similar. The only difference is, the introduction of the trustees into the Quarterly Conferences. This addition we conceive to be a valuable improvement, as those represent the property interests of the circuit or station. Though the composition of the leaders meeting and Quarterly Conferences are nearly similar with those of the old Church, yet the difference in character is very great. The leaders meeting in the Methodist Episcopal Church, is nothing more than an assemblage of the preacher's officers, appointed by him and subject to his removal at pleasure. While the leaders meeting in the Methodist Protestant Church, is an assembly of the representatives of the classes, elected by the classes, and subject to their removal. The same difference is seen in the Quarterly Conferences. Though nearly similar in composition, they differ materially in character. Those of the old Church being little more than collections of preacher's officers, completely under his influence; while a large majority of the members of the Quarterly Conferences of the new Church are the representatives of the people. For the leaders, stewards and trustees are all elected by the people, and consequently, feel a degree of independence of ministerial patronage, and a freedom from improper bias or control. Their measures and decisions, are to be received as the acts of the Church, performed by her *representatives*, who are not responsible to the ministers, but to their constituents for the faithful administration of their official duties.

The composition of our Quarterly Conferences is of a mixed character, partly representative, and partly not. All the ministers, preachers and exhorters, belonging to the circuit or station being admitted to seats. These represent no constituents, but have seats in virtue of ministerial character. They have a vote, in common with the other members of the Quarterly Conference, but possess no check power. The *common interest* must be plead as the reason for their admission. The unstationed ministers and preachers being assistant pastors, and required to labour in the Word and doctrine, must necessarily render an account somewhere and undergo an examination of character. Not being under the stationing authority of the Annual Conference, nor accountable to that body, and their ministerial labours and fairness of character being of great importance to the Church, it became indispensably necessary that they should have a seat and vote in the Quarterly Conference, and be there accountable; and, that, that body have authority to give an efficient direction to their labours. Moreover, it was in the power of these men, to have retained a seat in the Annual Conference, as under the Conventional Articles, but they magnanimously yielded privilege and power for the common good.

Thus we have endeavoured to exhibit the true character of the representation in the Methodist Protestant Church. The General Conferences being the legislative department of the whole Church, has a representation composed of an equal number of ministers and laymen, having a mutual check on each other. The Annual Conferences being executive or working bodies, have a representation from the circuits and stations equal in number and authority with the itinerant ministers, and a check power.

The Quarterly Conferences have also a mixed composition, well calculated to promote and secure the common interests of all concerned. While the leaders meetings are purely representative.

*The Itinerancy.*—By an itinerancy we mean, a system for the periodical interchange of ministers. This differs from what is called a *stated ministry*. The Lutheran, Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal and some other Churches, have a stated ministry; the congregations elect their ministers, who serve them as *permanent* pastors, not subject to removal, except by consent of the contracting parties. While Methodists, of nearly all descriptions, change their ministers.—An itinerancy may be made efficient under a despotic, or a representative form of Church government. In the former case, however, there must exist a disposition on the part of the people to yield all to the entire control of the preachers. The stationing authority may be in the hands of irresponsible bishops, or in those of the Annual Conference, without necessarily destroying an itinerancy; but, the very existence of an itinerancy depends upon the *periods* of change. If these be very much protracted, or made to depend for their ultimate termination on contingent circumstances, there will be great danger that the system will finally be merged into congregationalism; or, which is more to be dreaded, a system of bargain and sale of preachers. To preserve the itinerancy of our Church, and prevent so sad an issue, the constitution forbids the General Conference to pass any rule “to authorize the Annual Conferences to station their ministers and preachers longer than *three* years, successively, in the same circuit, and *two* years, successively, in the same station.”

The itinerant ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church consists of that part of her ministers who labour under the direction of the respective Annual Conferences, and are ultimately accountable to those bodies for their official conduct. The remaining portion of the ministers are called *unstationed* ministers, because they are not under the stationing authority of the Annual Conference; and have no particular station or circuit assigned them by that authority, nor are responsible to the Annual Conference.—Yet the constitution recognizes them as assistant pastors, in the circuits and stations wherein they respectively reside; and requires of them “all the pastoral service they can render consistently with their other engagements,” and makes them responsible to the Quarterly Conference of their circuit or station.

Here it should be carefully borne in mind, that notwithstanding one part of our ministers are under the stationing authority of the Annual Conference and called itinerant, and the remainder are not, yet, the two portions constitute *one body of ministers*, united as fellow-labourers in promoting the great interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and in building up and establishing our Zion. Every effort put forth to exalt the one at the expense of the other is suicidal in its nature, and has a direct tendency to alienate the affections of the brethren and to do serious injury to the Church at large. The best interests of our Zion will be consulted by encouraging both descriptions of ministers, and obtaining from them all the ministerial labour they may be able and willing to perform, in their respective spheres of action.



In consequence of the itinerant ministers giving their whole time to the active duties of the ministry, and subjecting themselves to the direction of the stationing authority of the Annual Conference, the constitution and discipline award to them the special oversight of the circuits and stations to which they may be appointed, and the execution of discipline. The particular oversight of the Churches and execution of discipline in an itinerancy must be lodged in some hands. There must of necessity be some executive officers for the discharge of executive duties, who have the requisite time for their due performance. In our system, the general oversight of a district is placed in the hands of an *elder*, who is termed the *President* of the Annual Conference. He is elected annually by the conference, but is not eligible more than three years successively, and is amenable to that body for his official conduct. The special oversight of each circuit and station is lodged in the hands of an *elder* called the *superintendent*. The duties of these as well as those of the president, are particularly described in the constitution and discipline, to which the reader is referred for further information. All the other ministers and preachers, stationed and unstationed, are viewed as assistants, and have their respective duties to perform; and, the whole are accountable directly to the representatives of the people.

The main advantages of an itinerant ministry lie in the three following particulars. First, a periodical change of ministers. Secondly, the facilities with which Churches are multiplied. And thirdly, the speedy, cheap, and certain spread of the Gospel.

1. A periodical change of ministers. Experience and observation have fully proven, that an occasional change

of ministers is productive of great spiritual good to the Churches. It is true, that a change of ministers may be carried to an injurious extreme, and produce a species of religious dissipation incompatible with a growth in knowledge and grace; but this is not a necessary consequence, attendant on an itinerant system, the object being to give a salutary change, and not one of injurious frequency. In almost every case that has come under our own observation, where a permanent minister has had the pastoral charge of a single congregation, a few years service has produced a dead calm, and a lamentable state of barrenness. And if at any period the congregation has been roused from its lethargic state, it has been in consequence of the labours of some strange minister, whom God in his good Providence has sent along as a refreshing shower to water the parched ground. An itinerant system furnishes a periodical change of ministers, and with these, a variety of talents and acquirements. - This practice is generally followed by happy effects. For before one minister becomes uninteresting, and consequently unprofitable, another takes his place—a new impulse is given, and the work goes on with continued energy. It is argued by some, that a permanent or stated ministry has this advantage: The ministers being resident with their congregations, have it in their power to bestow upon them more intimate and regular pastoral service than they could were they only occasional visitors, once in two or four weeks. But here it must be observed, that this comparison can only hold with circuits and not with stations; for each of the latter having a stated minister for one or two years in succession, enjoy all the benefits for the time being, of a permanent pastor; and in addition, the great advantage of a

change at the expiration of the minister's period of service.—From our own observations, for the last forty years, facts have confirmed us in the opinion, that two years in succession, is a period sufficiently long for any minister to remain in one station. We have uniformly found, that by the expiration of that period, a change was desirable and generally proved profitable.

2. Another advantage of an itinerancy lies in the facilities the system furnishes for the multiplication of Churches. With a settled ministry Churches are planted and sustained only in comparatively wealthy neighbourhoods, the poor and thinly inhabited districts of country necessarily remain without Churches until they acquire the ability to support each a minister. But with an itinerant ministry, Churches may be multiplied and sustained in any section of country, no matter how sparse or indigent the population. Because the expense of supporting a minister, instead of being made to rest on one congregation, may be divided among five, ten or twenty societies, and thus be made so light to each as to be borne without inconvenience.

3. This plan furnishes likewise, the very best facilities for the speedy and general spread of the Gospel, of any other in use among all the Churches. For by planting Churches in every neighbourhood, the whole extent of any country may be covered, and the Gospel carried to the very door of *every* man's residence. The system will produce similar effects to any extent. If it be argued, that those Churches who employ a stated ministry, labour to spread the Gospel by missionaries. Admitted.—But what can those missionaries effect as *pioneers* for a *stated* ministry? They may succeed in planting Churches in cities and villages to be occupied by

*permanent* ministers, but the great mass of the community must remain destitute of a regular supply until circumstances will justify the establishment of settled ministers. Not so with an itinerancy. This being missionary in all its operations, plants as it expands, and forms Churches, not only in cities and villages, but in all the surrounding country where the means of support are less abundant.

These advantages are real. They have been practically exhibited by the itinerant operations of Methodists both in England, and in this country. They stand out in bold relief, and force conviction on the mind of every unprejudiced observer. Every thing should therefore, be done to sustain and perpetuate our system of itinerancy, especially as it has been providentially freed from clerical despotism, and is so modeled as to secure the rights, privileges, and interests of all concerned. All unnecessary tampering with the constitution, should be rejected promptly, no matter how specious the reasons for change.—Let us test our system fully by practice, lest we subject ourselves to the imputation of being theoretical novices.

It should here be stated, what is freely admitted, that the benefits enjoyed by the Church through the agency of an itinerant ministry are, under God, obtained in the general at the expense of the labour and comfort of the itinerants. It is true many of them are much elevated in life by their connexion with the itinerancy, but notwithstanding this, the faithful itinerant minister will have to suffer many afflictions, but he will also have many consolations. If it will not be thought too discouraging, some of his afflictions might be mentioned. He who becomes an itinerant may calculate on his la-

bours being greatly increased and his privations multiplied. Except when in a station, his person will occasionally be exposed to the vicissitudes of the seasons. His residence will be frequently changed. His means for the support and education of his family will be limited, and at times inadequate. The idea of pinching want in advanced life will frequently harass him. And the occasional barren state of Churches and individuals on whom much labour had been bestowed, will yield no little discouragement, while labouring for the Church and the salvation of sinners. These are appalling considerations, but there are others of a consoling character, which serve as off-sets to them. A few of these may be mentioned. The itinerant is relieved from worldly business with all its multifarious cares, perplexities and uncertainties—ample time is furnished for storing his mind with the knowledge of divine things, and an extensive field for usefulness is opened before him. Being constantly engaged in spiritual things, his own soul must partake largely in heavenly comfort. His extensive intercourse with the followers of Christ, and the hearty welcome he meets with in the families and in the Churches, cannot fail to yield him great solace. And then, the prospect of being instrumental, under God, who has promised to be with him always, of winning many souls from the error of their ways—of diminishing human misery and adding to the stock of virtue and happiness, is cheering in the highest degree.—And finally, while he goes forth *weeping*, bearing precious seed, he has a blessed hope, founded on the immutable promise of God, of returning again, bearing his sheaves, and of presenting them to the Redeemer at the last day, and of receiving the plaudit, "*well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*"

## CHAPTER XXII.

STATISTICS OF THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH.  
1842.

## MARYLAND DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the States of Maryland and Delaware, that part of Pennsylvania lying east of the Alleghany Mountains, and not embraced within the Pennsylvania District, and Accomac, Northampton, Fairfax, Berkley, Frederick, Hampshire and Hardy Counties in Virginia.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
12.	24.	10.	68.	76.	9378.*

There are in this District 135 Houses of Worship; valued at \$154,600. Other property, such as Burial Grounds, Preachers' Dwelling Houses, &c., \$6,000.

## VIRGINIA DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes all the State of Virginia, not included within the Maryland and Pittsburg Districts.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
2.	10.	5.	18.	18.	1943.

There are in the Virginia District 31 Houses of Worship; valued at \$31,150.

## NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the State of North Carolina.

\*The number of Church members in the Maryland district is brought up to April, 1843. The increase in this district during the past conference year amounts to 2366.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
	4.		25.	18.	2758.

In this District there are 37 Houses of Worship; valued at \$8,675.

#### SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the State of South Carolina.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
1.	2.		7.	8.	1428.

There are in this District 9 Houses of Worship; valued at \$29,500.

#### GEORGIA DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the State of Georgia, and the Territory of East Florida.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
	6.	3.	22.	16.	1134.

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

#### ALABAMA DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes that part of the State of Alabama, lying south of the Tennessee river and the Territory of West Florida.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
3.	11.	4.	49.	16.	2611.

There are in this District 91 Houses of Worship; valued at \$34,000. Other property, \$3,000.

#### TENNESSEE DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the State of Tennessee, that part of the State of Kentucky lying south of the Kentucky river, and that part of the State of Alabama lying north of the Tennessee river.



Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed Min. & Preach.	Unstationed Min. & Preach.	Members.
1.	12.	5.	32.	29.	2140.

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

MISSISSIPPI DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the States of Mississippi and Louisiana.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed Min. & Preach.	Unstationed Min. & Preach.	Members.
—	12.	1.	31.	15.	1089.

There are in this District 38 Houses of Worship; valued at \$9,100.

ARKANSAS DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the States of Arkansas and Missouri, and the Territories lying west thereof.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed Min. & Preach.	Unstationed Min. & Preach.	Members.
—	5.	4.	19.	8.	936.

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

ILLINOIS DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the State of Illinois, the Territory of Iowa, and all the Territories lying west thereof.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed Min. & Preach.	Unstationed Min. & Preach.	Members.
1.	20.	5.	40.	55.	2455.

There are in this District 14 Houses of Worship; valued at \$7,200.

MICHIGAN DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the State of Michigan, and that part of Indiana known as the La-porte Mission.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed Min. & Preach.	Unstationed Min. & Preach.	Members.
—	8.	1.	19.	9.	600.

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

## INDIANA DISTRICT.

This District includes the State of Indiana, with the exception of that part known as the Laporte Mission.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
—	10.	4.	42.	38	3071.

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

## OHIO DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes that part of the State of Ohio lying west of the Scioto and Sandusky rivers, excepting the counties of Crawford, Seneca and Sandusky, and that part of the State of Kentucky lying north of the Kentucky river.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
1.	15.	1.	31.	57.	4427.

There are in the Ohio District 36 Houses of Worship; valued at \$31,000. Burial Ground in Cincinnati, \$10,000.

## PITTSBURG DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes that part of the State of Ohio lying east of the Ohio District, that part of the State of Pennsylvania lying west of the Alleghany Mountains, and not embraced within the Pennsylvania District, and that part of the State of Virginia lying west of the Alleghany and north of the Cumberland Mountains.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
11.	45.	7.	95.	122.	12,000.*

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

\*The increase of members in the Pittsburg District for the last conference year is supposed to be fully *two thousand*.

## PENNSYLVANIA DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District begins at the junction of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers, and runs thence by a direct line to Harrisburg, including that city; thence by the Susquehanna river to the mouth of the Juniatta; thence up the Juniatta to the dividing line of Mifflin and Huntingdon counties; thence by a direct line due north into Alleghany county, New York, so far as to embrace Broome county by a line due east; thence by the north-east and east lines of Broome county, to the Delaware, and thence, by said river to the place of beginning.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
2.	6.	3.	17.	21.	1177.

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

## NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the States of New Jersey and Connecticut, and that part of the State of New York lying south and east of a line beginning at the north-west corner of Sullivan county on the Delaware river, and running thence northerly to the south-west corner of Montgomery county; thence easterly to Lansingburg on the North river, including that town: thence south by said river to Troy, and thence easterly to the north-west corner of Massachusetts, including Long and Staten Islands.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
7.	21.	—	34.	—	2363.

There are in this District 26 Houses of Worship; valued at \$53,000.

## GENESEE DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District commences at the point where the Old Pre-emption line intersects Lake Ontario,

and runs thence in a direct line to the foot of Seneca Lake; thence up the middle of said Lake to the line of the Pennsylvania District; thence west to the north-west corner of said District; thence south to the southern boundary line of the State of New York; thence by said State line to Lake Erie, and thence by said Lake to the Niagara river and Lake Ontario, to the place of beginning.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
—	10.	—	21.	9.	900.

In the Genesee District there are 4 Houses of Worship; valued at \$7,500.

#### CHAMPLAIN DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District commences at the north-east corner of the State of New York, and runs thence along the western line of the Vermont District to the south-west corner of Montgomery county; thence north-westerly in a direct line to the mouth of Oswego river, thence along Lake Ontario and the River St. Lawrence to the line of Lower Canada, and thence by said line to the place of beginning.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
1.	7.	—	11.	—	785.

Number of Houses of Worship not ascertained.

#### ONONDAGUA DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District commences at the point where the Old Pre-emption line intersects Lake Ontario, and runs thence southerly, bounding on the Genesee District, to the line of the Pennsylvania District; thence along said line to the Delaware river; thence northerly to the south-west corner of Montgomery county; thence north-westerly in a direct line to the mouth of the Os-

wego river, and thence by Lake Ontario to the place of beginning.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
2.	13.	—	21.	6.	887.

There are in this District 4 Houses of Worship; valued at \$3,500.

#### VERMONT DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District commences at the south-east corner of the State of Vermont, and runs thence westerly to Lansingburg, on the North river, leaving the town in the New York District; thence westerly to the south-west corner of Montgomery county; thence northerly along the west boundary of Montgomery and Fulton counties; thence from the north-west corner of Fulton county easterly opposite the town of Athol; thence along the western boundary of Athol and Johnsburg, as far north as the south line of Elizabethtown; thence easterly along the south line of Elizabethtown to Lake Champlain; thence down the Lake to the Canada line; thence east to the north-west corner of New Hampshire, and thence to the place of beginning.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
—	14.	—	21.	4.	893.

#### BOSTON DISTRICT.

*Boundaries.*—This District includes the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachussetts, and Rhode Island.

Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed	Unstationed	Members.
			Min. & Preach.	Min. & Preach.	
5.	4.	2.	12.	—	900.

We regret exceedingly, that we could only ascertain the number and value of the Churches for eleven Conferences out of twenty-one.

## RECAPITULATION.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES.	Stations.	Circuits.	Missions.	Stationed Minis- ters & Preachers.	Unstationed Min- isters & Preach.	Members.
Maryland, .	12	24	10	68	76	9,378
Virginia, . . .	2	10	5	18	18	1,943
North Carolina,	—	4	—	25	18	2,758
South Carolina, .	1	2	—	7	8	1,428
Georgia, . . .	—	6	3	22	16	1,134
Alabama, . . .	3	11	4	49	16	2,611
Tennessee, . . .	1	12	5	32	29	2,140
Mississippi, . . .	—	12	1	31	15	1,089
Arkansas, . . .	—	5	4	19	8	936
Illinois, . . .	1	20	5	40	55	2,455
Michigan, . . .	—	8	1	19	9	600
Indiana, . . .	—	10	4	42	38	3,071
Ohio, . . .	1	15	1	31	57	4,427
Pittsburg, . . .	11	45	7	95	122	12,000
Pennsylvania, . .	2	6	3	17	21	1,177
N. York & N. Jersey,	7	21	—	34	—	2,363
Genesee, . . .	—	10	—	21	9	900
Champlain, . . .	1	7	—	11	—	785
Onondagua, . . .	2	13	—	21	6	887
Vermont, . . .	—	14	—	21	4	893
Boston, . . .	5	4	2	12	—	900

Total, 49 259 52 634 525 53,875

Stationed Ministers and Preachers, 634

Unstationed " " " 525

Whole number, 55,034

Whole number of Houses of Worship, so far  
as reported, 421

Estimated value of Church property, so far  
as reported, \$412,225

THE END.

